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Can marks and report cards be abolished in the
elementary schools?

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THESIS

Can Marks and Report Cards Be Abolished in the Elementary Schools?

Submitted by

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(B.S., State Teachers College, Bridgewater, 1928)

in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education

1934

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THE PROBLEM: The purpose of this study of report cards and marks in the elementary schools is to:

1. Trace the origin of the report card form and explain its contents.
2. Present a situation where a traditional report card is used showing the results of uniform standards.
3. Give an example of continual revision of the report card from the traditional form to the newer type in a rural community.
4. Show the value of the teacher's constructive criticism as a substitute for marks.
5. Tell about the use of the personal letter instead of a report card.

Chapter I

Origin of the Report Card

"One of the earliest systems in the United States was the one in which the teachers wrote the grades and remarks on the fly leaf, or on the margins of the leaves of the pupils' text-books. This custom of record keeping was used to some extent from the time of the colonial schools until school authorities began to send report cards to parents."[1] This procedure could be easily followed in the early days of our public schools. Often a pupil would use the same books for a few years. The comments of the teacher or teachers accumulated on the fly leaves. These personal estimations of scholarship belonged to the pupils because they owned the books.

The first trace of keeping a record of marks for the "public view" is found in the Connecticut Common School Journal in a discussion concerning the keeping of the register. "Faithfully kept, open at all times to the inspection of parent and visitors in the school, communicated weekly or monthly to parents and guardians, and the result for each scholar read at the close of the term, a register would be the original document for accurate instead of conjectural school returns, a powerful and unobjectionable stimulus to the ambition of pupils, an important auxiliary to teachers in securing regular and punctual habits of attendance and study."[2]

The Common School Journal for the next year brings forth

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1. F.E. Knight - "The Construction of a Cumulative Record for Elementary Schools", (unpublished Master's Thesis, Yale Univ. - 1927
2. Connecticut Common School Journal, vol.I, 1838-1839,p.174

a formal report card which was commonly used in a restricted locality. "In many schools, the committees and teachers have gone altogether beyond the requisition of the law, and have adopted the practice of keeping a record of the recitations and behavior of each scholar, and of sending home a weekly or monthly abstract, as a report to the parents and guardians. The result has been to interest parental cooperation in the work of the teacher, and to bring a powerful and unobjectionable instrument of moral discipline into the school."[1]

The following is a report form which was issued in several of the common schools in Hartford, Connecticut and the general vicinity.[2]

____Weekly Report for ________________

The Parent or Guardian is requested to examine and sign this report weekly

________________ Principal

Winter Term 1838-9	Attendance			Deportment			Improvement			Remarks	Sign.
	Punctual	Tardy	Absent	Good	Mediate	Bad	Good	Mediate	Bad		

(From Connecticut Common School Journal, vol.I, p.192 - 1838-1839)

---

1. Connecticut Common School Journal, vol.II, 1839-49, p.192
2. Ibid - p.192, Appendix 6

A recent study of how report cards originated states: "The pupil report had its origin in a 'deportment' card. In 1863 Superintendent Sill in his annual report to the Detroit Board of Education suggested that there should be devised some just and uniform plan of keeping account of scholarship and deportment of all the pupils in the schools and also some system of frequent reports to parents for pupils' standings in junior and senior grades in high school."[1] Evidently this suggestion was not carried out, for we find the principal of the high school complaining in 1889 that "The work of monthly reports (to parents) would be enormous and unnecessary, for more important work should be sacrificed by teachers for this drudgery. Parents may assume fair work if no notice to the contrary is received."

"Up to this period, it was customary for teachers to keep all pupils' records in a school register based upon the one recommended by Horace Mann in his tenth report given in the Connecticut Common School Journal of 1846.

"The spread of democratic ideas in education brought the home and school into closer relationship and by the middle nineties, the deportment card had come into general use, evidently, and had much the same form and content as the conservative type in use today. One card was used from Grades 1-8 but pupils in Grades 1 and 2 were not marked in as many subjects. The emphasis was entirely on subject matter, but a mark was given in deportment, or conduct as it was sometimes called."[2]

---

1. Mary N. Holland - "Creating Effective Pupil Reports" - Bulletin No.10, Dept. of Elementary School Principals, p.363
2. Ibid.

This survey constituted a part of the work of a committee appointed by Dr. Samuel L. Chew, Superintendent of District 5, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A survey of pupil report card forms was made to get a general view of the things existing in report cards to enable a committee "to formulate a report form superior to those being used at the present time."[1]

Sample report cards were studied from the principal cities in the country. Alaska, Hawaii, Phillipine Islands, Mississippi, Arkansas, South Dakota, New Mexico, and Nevada failed to send report card forms for examination. There were two hundred and twenty-four responses in all. Table I gives the number of replies listed according to states.

Table I - Distribution of Replies by States

State or District	Number of Cities
Massachusetts	20
New York	20
New Jersey	16
Illinois	14
Pennsylvania	12
Ohio	12
California	10
Indiana	9
Virginia	6
Michigan	6
Wisconsin	6

---

[1] Francis E. Homer - "A Survey of Elementary School Pupil Report Forms", Bulletin No.8, Dept. of Elementary School Principals. p.218

Connecticut	5
Florida	5
Kentucky	5
Iowa	5
Washington	5
Maine	4
Rhode Island	4
Maryland	4
Texas	4
Montana	4
Vermont	3
South Carolina	3
Georgia	3
Minnesota	3
Missouri	3
Oklahoma	3
Colorado	3
New Hampshire	2
Delaware	2
North Carolina	2
Alabama	2
Tennessee	2
Nebraska	2
Kansas	2
Louisiana	2
Wyoming	2

Oregon	2
West Virginia	1
North Dakota	1
Idaho	1
Utah	1
Arizona	1
Porto Rico	1
District of Columbia	1

General Characteristics of Report Card Forms

Time covered - Sixty-five and one half percent of the cities studied use report cards for a school year. "The remaining 34.5 percent of the cards are for one term only."[1]

Frequency of issue - Slightly more than one third of the report card forms used by cities are sent out every month. Twenty-eight and seven tenths percent of the cities give out reports three times each term. Nineteen and one half percent of the cities give reports twice a term. Thirteen and three tenths percent give four reports per term. Bi-monthly issues of marks are given by three and five tenths percent of those reporting. "Issues of once and three times a year are used by one city each of those reporting."[2]

Subjects listed - Fifty-five percent of the cities report on general school subjects, specifying each subject for an individual mark. Forty-two and nine tenths percent of the report

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[1] Ibid., p. 219
[2] Ibid.

forms list a combination of school subjects, habits and attitudes. Three cities do not list subjects but leave a blank space which may be used for reporting on subjects if the teacher wishes to comment on definite school work. Two cities issue a report form which does not give marks for school subjects. These cards are given over to habits and attitudes.

Marking Symbols - "Forty percent use symbols A, B, C, and so forth. The letters E, G, F, and so forth (standing for excellent good, and fair) are used by 28 percent. Marking on the basis of 100 is used by 14.8 percent; on the basis of 5 by three percent; on the basis of 4 by 1.3 percent; and on the basis of 6 by .4 percent. Four cities use either 'satisfactory' and 'unsatisfactory' or the plus and minus signs."[1]

Explanations to parents and guardians - Approximately three-fourths of the report cards give a short explanation for the home. Lengthy explanations are presented in about one-fourth of the cards. "Only about five percent omit explanations entirely."[2]

Over fifty percent of the forms give brief advice. "Lengthy advice is given on about one-tenth."[3] The rest of the reports do not mention this article.

Two thirds of the cities specifically extend a cordial invitation to visit the schools. Nearly as many urge the school and home to work together for the good of the child.

Size - Forty-five percent of the cities sending in forms for examination use cards four inches long and six inches wide.

1.Ibid., p. 219
2. Ibid.,p. 219
3. Ibid.,p. 219

Seventeen percent use the folder type. Two percent use a small booklet.

Color - Over sixty percent of the cities use white in making their report card forms; yellow is used in eighteen and six-tenths percent of the cities; tan is used by nine and five tenths percent, and blue by four and two tenths percent. From one and seven tenths percent to four percent use salmon, pink, brown, gray, and green.[1]

Miscellaneous Items on Report Cards

"Diagram 1 shows the percent of cities listing attendance, lateness, conduct, and other miscellaneous items. It will be seen for example, that 'days or sessions absent' is listed in 95 percent of the cases. The item 'dismissed early' frequently used in New England is listed by 14.7 percent of the 224 cities. The other items concerning attendance vary from 1.3 percent for 'number of school days' to 3.7 percent for 'days or sessions present.' [2]

All but 4.5 percent of the report card forms examined use 'days or sessions late.' Four cities use the expression 'minutes lost by lateness.' [3]

Over three fourths of the cards list conduct or citizenship.' The majority of the others substitute habits and attitudes, to take the place of this item.

"Effort and industry" is used by 59.8 percent of the cities. Cities which omit this item list appropriate habits and attitudes.

"Promotions", "examinations" and "health of the pupil" explain themselves.[4]

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[1] Ibid., p. 220
[2] Ibid., p. 220
[3] Ibid., p. 220
[4] Ibid., p. 221

The last item mentioned in Diagram 1 is the rating of pupils. Forty percent of the cities do not indicate a general rating. Over one third use an average of the general school marks. Nineteen and six tenths percent of the 224 cities list the term "general standing". Various other items are listed on the diagram.

General Subjects Listed on Report Forms

"Diagram 2 shows the 44 general subjects which were on the report card forms that were examined. Arithmetic leads with 97.7 percent. Reading, handwriting, English, spelling, history, geography, art education, and music follow very closely with percents varying from 96.4 for the first, to 89.2 for the last."[1]

"A study was made of the report cards as to the average number of school subjects and the average number of habits and skills. Although the data were incomplete, there is evidence that certain cities and states consider it relatively unimportant to report upon the pupil's personal qualities."[2]

Diagrams 3 and 4 present 163 habits and attitudes listed according to their frequency of mention. Figures are given in percent of the total number of 224 cities.

"Diagram 5 shows the combination into 14 groups of 163 habits and attitudes named in Diagrams 3 and 4. The qualities given under each heading are also the results of combination.

Diagram 5 shows some really strong habits and attitudes. Many of these characteristics are well worth considering in the selection of items for an improved report form.

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1. Ibid., p. 221
2. Ibid., p. 221

"The most frequently mentioned group headings are 'dependableness', 'attitude toward others', 'carefulness', and 'cooperation' ranging from 28.6 percent to 23.2 percent. Outstanding specific items are 'courtesy' and 'helpfulness' as shown by 21.9 percent respectively.

"The negative habits and attitudes, 'needs encouragement' and 'inattentive', are the two most frequently used. Each is listed by 10.2 percent of the cities studied."[1]

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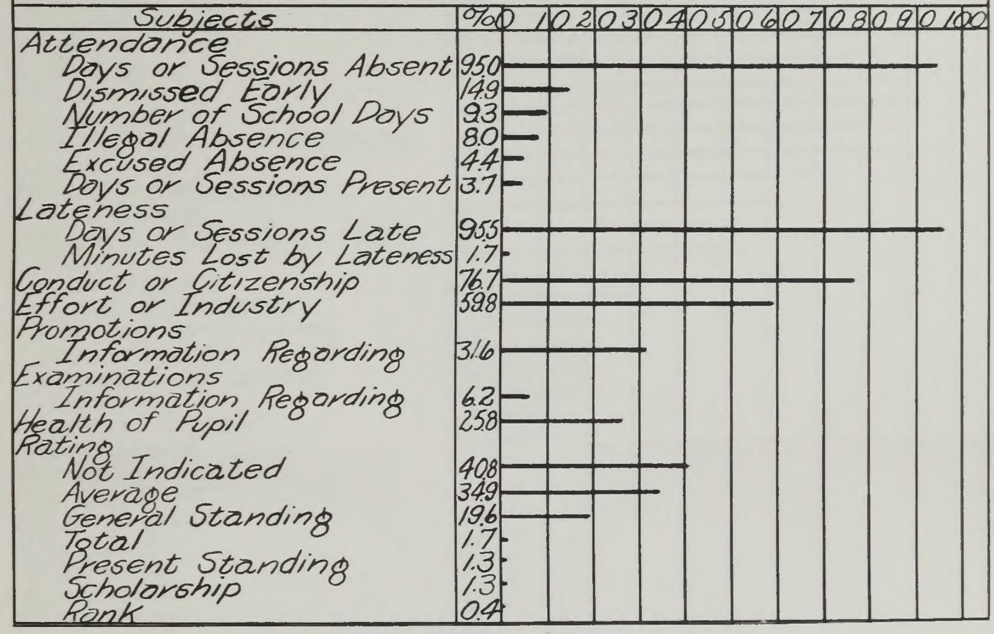
1. Ibid. p. 226

Diagram 1 Miscellaneous Items on Report Cards



Subjects	%
Attendance	
Days or Sessions Absent	95.0
Dismissed Early	14.9
Number of School Days	9.3
Illegal Absence	8.0
Excused Absence	4.4
Days or Sessions Present	3.7
Lateness	
Days or Sessions Late	95.5
Minutes Lost by Lateness	1.7
Conduct or Citizenship	76.7
Effort or Industry	59.8
Promotions	
Information Regarding	31.6
Examinations	
Information Regarding	6.2
Health of Pupil	25.8
Rating	
Not Indicated	40.8
Average	34.9
General Standing	19.6
Total	1.7
Present Standing	1.3
Scholarship	1.3
Rank	0.4

Taken from Francis E. Homer "A Survey of Elementary School Report Forms". Bulletin No.8, Dept. of Elementary School Principals. p. 220

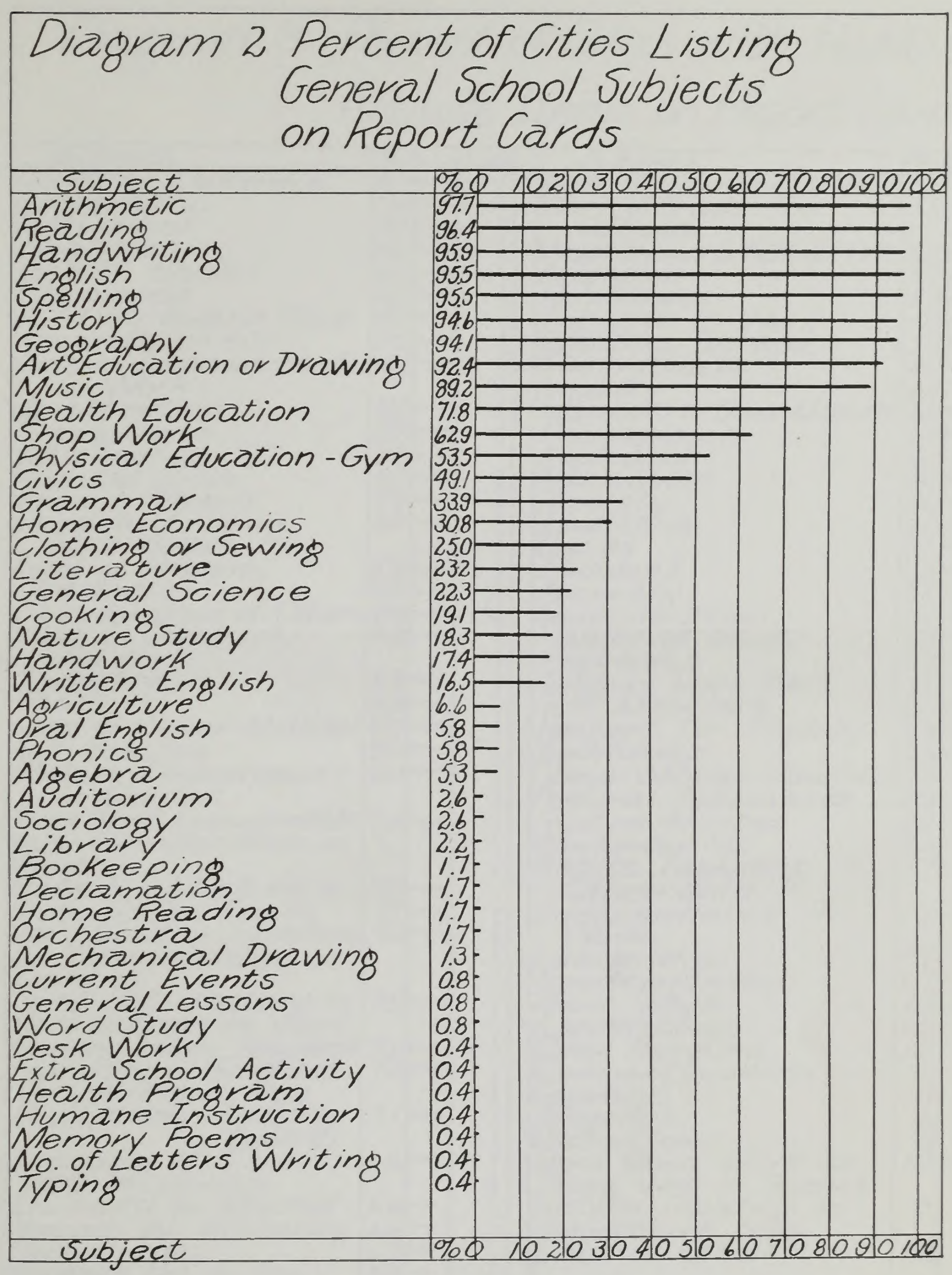


Diagram 2 Percent of Cities Listing General School Subjects on Report Cards

Taken from Francis E. Homer "A Survey of Elementary School Report Forms". Bulletin No.8, Dept. of Elementary School Principals. p. 222

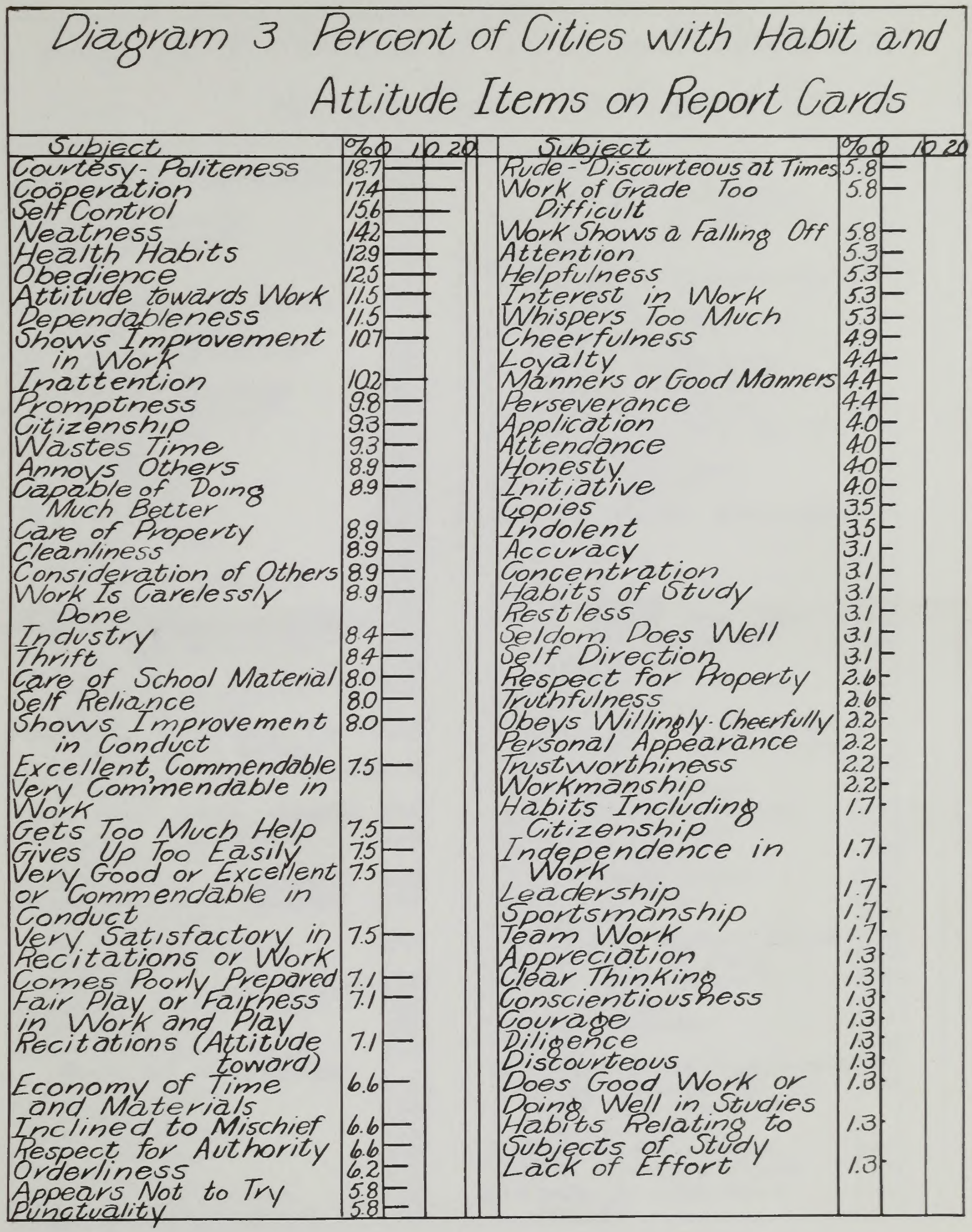


Diagram 3 Percent of Cities with Habit and Attitude Items on Report Cards

Subject	%
Courtesy- Politeness	18.7
Coöperation	17.4
Self Control	15.6
Neatness	14.2
Health Habits	12.9
Obedience	12.5
Attitude towards Work	11.5
Dependableness	11.5
Shows Improvement in Work	10.7
Inattention	10.2
Promptness	9.8
Citizenship	9.3
Wastes Time	9.3
Annoys Others	8.9
Capable of Doing Much Better	8.9
Care of Property	8.9
Cleanliness	8.9
Consideration of Others	8.9
Work Is Carelessly Done	8.9
Industry	8.4
Thrift	8.4
Care of School Material	8.0
Self Reliance	8.0
Shows Improvement in Conduct	8.0
Excellent, Commendable Very Commendable in Work	7.5
Gets Too Much Help	7.5
Gives Up Too Easily	7.5
Very Good or Excellent or Commendable in Conduct	7.5
Very Satisfactory in Recitations or Work	7.5
Comes Poorly Prepared	7.1
Fair Play or Fairness in Work and Play	7.1
Recitations (Attitude toward)	7.1
Economy of Time and Materials	6.6
Inclined to Mischief	6.6
Respect for Authority	6.6
Orderliness	6.2
Appears Not to Try	5.8
Punctuality	5.8
Rude - Discourteous at Times	5.8
Work of Grade Too Difficult	5.8
Work Shows a Falling Off	5.8
Attention	5.3
Helpfulness	5.3
Interest in Work	5.3
Whispers Too Much	5.3
Cheerfulness	4.9
Loyalty	4.4
Manners or Good Manners	4.4
Perseverance	4.4
Application	4.0
Attendance	4.0
Honesty	4.0
Initiative	4.0
Copies	3.5
Indolent	3.5
Accuracy	3.1
Concentration	3.1
Habits of Study	3.1
Restless	3.1
Seldom Does Well	3.1
Self Direction	3.1
Respect for Property	2.6
Truthfulness	2.6
Obeys Willingly- Cheerfully	2.2
Personal Appearance	2.2
Trustworthiness	2.2
Workmanship	2.2
Habits Including Citizenship	1.7
Independence in Work	1.7
Leadership	1.7
Sportsmanship	1.7
Team Work	1.7
Appreciation	1.3
Clear Thinking	1.3
Conscientiousness	1.3
Courage	1.3
Diligence	1.3
Discourteous	1.3
Does Good Work or Doing Well in Studies	1.3
Habits Relating to Subjects of Study	1.3
Lack of Effort	1.3

Taken from Francis E. Homer "A Survey of Elementary School Report Forms". Bulletin No.8, Dept. of Elementary School Principals. p. 225

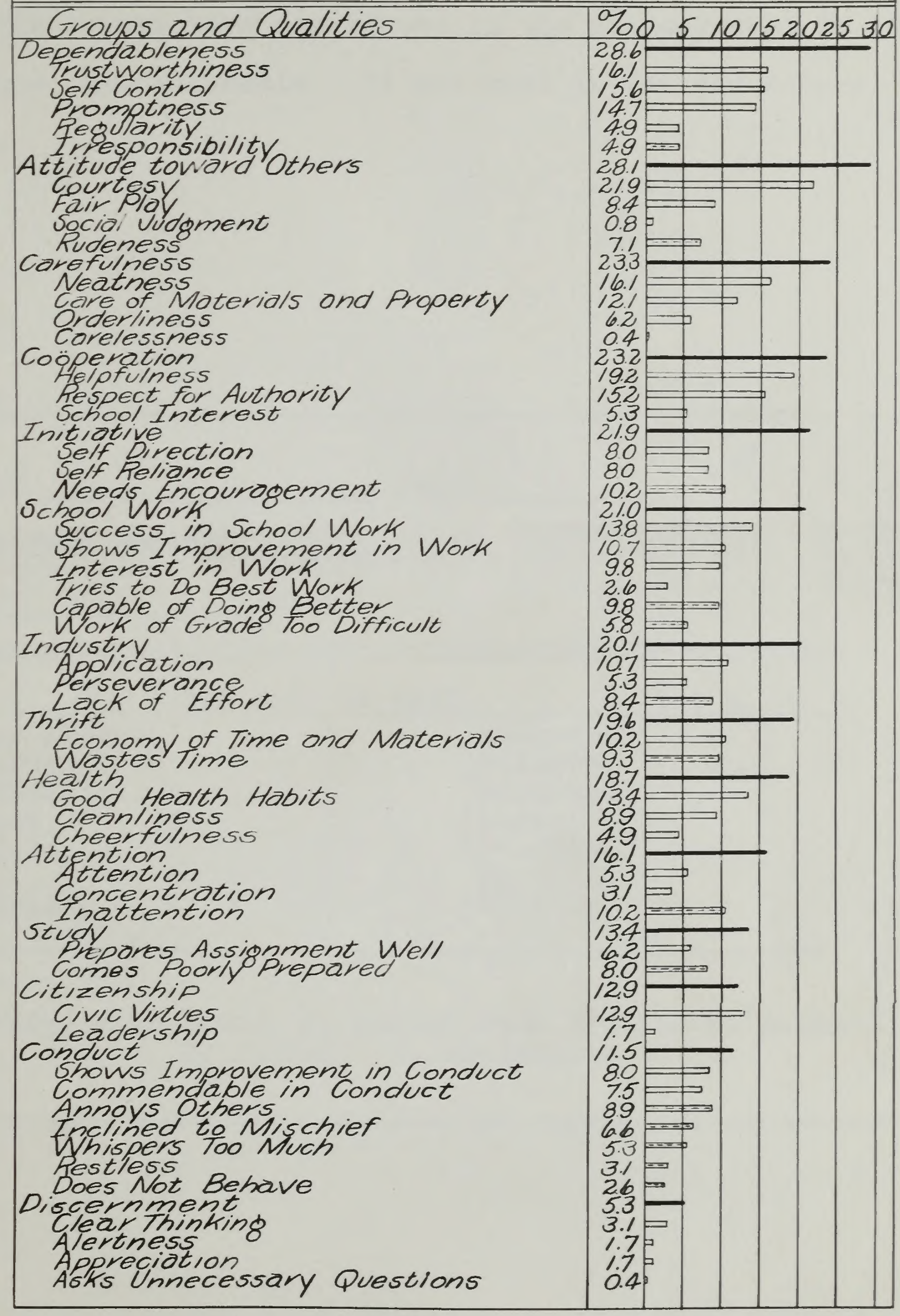
Diagram 4 Percent of Cities with Habit and Attitude Items on Report Cards

Subject	%
Needs Encouragement	1.3
Regularity	1.3
School Interest	1.3
School Service	1.3
Speech	1.3
Studiness	1.3
Appreciation of Proper Use of Money	0.8
Asks Good Questions	0.8
Carefulness	0.8
Character Building	0.8
Civility of Speech	0.8
Disobedience	0.8
Disorder	0.8
Home Study	0.8
Home Work	0.8
Indifference	0.8
Irresponsible	0.8
Kindness	0.8
More Study Needed	0.8
Observation	0.8
Prepares Adjustments Well	0.8
School Spirit	0.8
Sociability	0.8
Willingness to Render Public Service	0.8
Ability to Think and Do Independent Work	0.4
Ability in Various Branches of Study	0.4
Alert and Wide Awake	0.4
Answers Questions Pointedly	0.4
Appreciation of Beauty	0.4
Appreciation of Juvenile Literature	0.4
Asks Unnecessary Questions	0.4
Attitude toward Others	0.4
Attitude toward Self	0.4
Carelessness	0.4
Care of Clothes and Personal Belongings	0.4
Deceitfulness	0.4
Destructive	0.4
Disturbs Class	0.4
Does Not Try	0.4
Frankness	0.4
General Influence	0.4
General Intelligence	0.4

Subject	%
Generosity and Broadmindedness	0.4
Golden Rule in Practice	0.4
Habits of Work	0.4
Insolence	0.4
Interest in Community Welfare	0.4
Interest in Physical Well Being	0.4
Interest in Special Subjects (Art, Music, etc)	0.4
Lack of Application	0.4
Lifeless, Possibly Due to Late Hours	0.4
Mechanical Skill	0.4
Musical Skill	0.4
Needs Home Encouragement	0.4
Patriotism	0.4
Physical Energy	0.4
Plays Freely	0.4
Plays Hard and Fair	0.4
Pride in Personal Appearance	0.4
Progress in Habits	0.4
Purposefulness	0.4
Readily Admits Mistakes and Tries to Make Amends	0.4
Reasoning	0.4
Resents Correction	0.4
Sees His Task Through	0.4
Sense of Humor	0.4
Slow to obey	0.4
Social Judgment	0.4
Speed in Work	0.4
Stubborn	0.4
Success in School Work	0.4
Takes Care of Self	0.4
Tardy with Work	0.4
Thoroughness	0.4
Thoughtfulness	0.4
Tidiness	0.4
Too Many Social Engagements	0.4
Tries to Measure Up to High Standards of Workmanship	0.4
Willingness to Work	0.4
Work Carefully Done	0.4
Works to Maximum Ability	0.4

Taken from Francis E. Homer "A Survey of Elementary School Report Forms". Bulletin No.8, Dept. of Elementary School Principals.

Diagram 5 Percents Showing Outstanding Habit and Attitude Items on Report Cards



Heavy bar indicates Heading
Light bar indicates Positive Habit or Attitude
Dotted bar indicates Negative Habit or Attitude

Taken from Francis E. Homer "A Survey of Elementary School Report Forms", Bulletin No.8, Dept. of Elementary School Principals. p.223

This report card was issued in the Stone School in 1905 at Walpole, Massachusetts. It was used in the elementary schools.

Report of____________________ Grade__________

For Term Ending_____________19

______________________School

	1st Half	2d Half		1st H.	2d H.
Half Days Absent,			Geography,		
Times Tardy,			History,		
Times Dismissed,			Language,		
Deportment,			Music,		
Mathematics,			Reading,		
Drawing,			Spelling,		
Ele. Science,			Writing,		

H, passed with honor; C, passed with credit; P, passed; F, failed; I, incomplete.

First Half) Parent

Second Half) Teacher

Report Card Elementary Grades Used in Needham, Massachusetts - 1896

Report of____________________

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Arithmetic	Geography	History	Physiology	Language	Drawing	Music			Attendance	Deportment
Sept.														
Oct.														
Nov.														
Dec.														
Jan.														
Feb.														
Mar.														
Apr.														
May														
June														

____________________School.

____

EXPLANATION

H is an honor mark rarely attained, and signifies that the pupil's work has been continuously of the highest order.
E signifies excellent;
G good; F fair; P poor;
V very poor.
No pupil whose average in scholarship is below grade F, or in attendance below G is entitled to promotion.

TO PARENTS

In this report the teacher gives you each month her best estimate of the character of your child's conduct and scholarship. It is earnestly desired that you carefully inspect the other side of this card and after signing your name below, return it to the teacher. If the record is not satisfactory, confer with the teacher.

Sept.____________________
Oct.____________________
Nov.____________________
Dec.____________________
Jan.____________________
Feb.____________________
Mar.____________________
Apr.____________________
May____________________
June____________________

This report card was used in the elementary grades in the of Natick, Massachusetts in 1904.

NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Report of

1904-5

School

Class

	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Arithmetic	Geography	History	Physiology	Language	Drawing	Music	Grammar	Sloyd	Algebra	Attendance	Deportment
Sept.															
Oct.															
Nov.															
Dec.															
Jan.															
Feb.															
Mar.															
Apr.															
May															
June															

EXPLANATION

H is an honor mark rarely attained, and signifies that the pupil's work has been continuously of the highest order. E signifies Excellent; G, Good; F, Fair; P, Poor; V, Very Poor. Promotions are made upon the recommendation of the teachers, subject to the approval of the Superintendent and may be made at any time. In general it may be said that poor work in two or more of the essential subjects will endanger a pupil's prospects of promotion.

TO PARENTS. In this report the teacher gives you each month her best estimate of the character of your child's conduct and scholarship. It is earnestly desired that you carefully inspect the other side of this card, and after signing your name below, return it to the teacher. If the record is not satisfactory, confer with the teacher.

Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec.
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
Apr.
May
June

Chapter II

Use of the Traditional Report Card with Uniform Standards

REPORT CARD - ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, NEEDHAM, MASS. - 1934

The report card listed below is used in the elementary schools in Needham, Massachusetts.

Monthly Report of.............................. Grade.........

19.... MONTH	Reading	Writing	Spelling	Language	Arithmetic	Geography	History	Grammar	Science	Drawing	Music			Absent	Tardy	Dismissed	Effort	Deportment	Parent's Signature
Average																			

100 is the highest number attainable in any subject.

NEEDHAM ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

To the Parents

Rank is based on the scale 100. A(90-100) denotes excellent work; B(80-89), good; C(70-79), fair; D(60-69), unsatisfactory; F(below 60), failure.

Please examine carefully each month's report, sign the card and return it promptly to the teacher. This is the means by which the school informs the parents of the work that the children are doing. Any unsatisfactory report should be investigated at once. Parents are requested to visit the schools, consult the teachers and superintendent, and co-operate with us in promoting the best interests of the pupils. Promotions will be made upon recommendation of teachers, with the approval of the superintendent.

School___________________________________ Teacher

Promoted To Grade_______________________193 .

J. C. Davis, Supt.

It is issued eight times a year. Report cards are not used in the kindergarten. Reading is the only academic subject marked in the first grade. At present the first mark is given in the first grade when the second marking period is completed. In the second grade reading and arithmetic are marked. The reading is marked from the beginning of the year; arithmetic is marked at the close of the second marking period. The third grade marks reading, spelling, and arithmetic. Reading, spelling, language, arithmetic, drawing, and music are marked in grade four. In grade five reading, spelling, language, arithmetic, drawing, music, and one mark is given for geography and history. The pupils in grade six are marked in reading, spelling, geography, history, drawing, music, and science. All pupils in grades three through six are marked each time in the spaces titled "Absent, Tardy, Dismissed, Effort and Deportment."

While visiting classrooms in our schools and others questions were asked of the pupils concerning their report cards and marks. Frequently it was found that pupils in fifth and sixth grades did not know what was expected of them in order that they might receive an A or B in a given subject. Parents came to my office to inquire about the requirements for a specific mark in a given study. Often conferences were held in my office or in the teachers' room concerning levels of achievement. The need for uniformity in standards for all grades was apparent. Meetings were held with individual teachers and groups of teachers to discuss standards in the subjects which were marked on

the report card. Each teacher had her own conception of what the rank of A was in a subject. A number of teachers thought that some subjects were harder than others, and should, because of this condition, warrant the giving of lower or higher marks. The teachers were asked to list the subjects which they marked according to their difficulty. We take the stand that the teacher can make the subject easy or difficult as she chooses. This is shown through the evidence that teachers present when they list the difficult and easy subjects. These lists do not agree.

A few teachers explained the five point scale found on the back of our report cards:

"A(90-100), denotes excellent work; B(80-89), good; C(70-79), fair; D(60-69), unsatisfactory; F(below 60), failure"[1]

through the use of a collection of work kept in a notebook. Samples of childrens' work in the different subjects which were marked A, B, C, D, and F were kept on file. The names were taken from these papers before they were exhibited. These teachers felt that each youngster could increase his efficiency by understanding the marks. When this is done, the pupil, by knowing whatis required of him, has a fair chance to succeed. Teachers in grade one were handicapped because they could not do this type of thing with their oral reading. When parents called to hear an A reader the teacher designated children of this calibre as they read in their groups.

The need for standards in the things we were marking was apparent. Groups of teachers were assigned subjects for study

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1. Elementary School Report Card, Needham, Mass.

in the formation of standards.

In examining the literature on the subject of marks and standards it is interesting to note the absence of standards by which teachers could guide themselves in their grading of the subjects taught in school in the different grades.

Trabue states: "Practically every teacher, trained or untrained, must work out her own scheme for assigning scholarship marks. It is not strange therefore, that there are great differences among teachers, not only in the actual marks they assign, but also in the qualities they intend their marks to measure."[1]

Starch states: "The manner in which marks are distributed to pupils varies enormously from teacher to teacher and from school to school. No one realized the seriousness of the situation until specific tabulations and comparisons were made."[2]

Reeder in a discussion of teachers' marks tells us: "One fact above all other facts, has, however, been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt -- namely that teachers' marks are variable, and are therefore unreliable."[3]

Hulten states: "Teachers' marks are mere guesses, some good, some poor, some indifferent. Since they are mere guesses, they are not sufficiently reliable to be used for promotion purposes."[4]

Ayer states: "Most thoughtful teachers feel considerable uncertainty about the reliability of the grades they assign and frequently find it difficult to defend their reasons for an individual grade assigned."[5]

Cubberley in discussing marks states: "The grading of the work in the school subjects is quite variable, and often without standard."[6]

Ashbaugh in writing on the variability of teachers' marks states: "An agreement on the part of the teachers to a clear cut definition of what is being marked and the relative value to be assigned to the various elements will do even more, in reducing the variability of teachers' ratings and in making them a valuable adjunct in school administration."[7]

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1. Marion Rex Trabue, Measuring Results in Education, p.43
2. Daniel Starch, Educational Psychology, p.426
3. Ward G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration, p.349
4. C. E. Hulten, The Personal Element in Teachers' Marks, Journal of Educational Research, Vol.12, p. 54, June 1922
5. Fred C. Ayer, Taking the Guess out of Grading, American School Board Journal, Vol.83,p.83, October 1931
6. Elwood P. Cubberley, The Principal and His School, p.505
7. E. J. Ashbaugh, Journal of Educ. Research, Vol.9,p.198, - March 1924

Bangs and Green in an intensive study on marks asked this question: "Do you use in the school system in which you are working any definition of marks: i.e. do you have any definite standards in objective terms for an "A", a "B", a "C", etc.? Forty-five teachers replying to this question say that they do not have such standards, twenty-two report "yes", and forty-seven report that letter grades are defined in terms of percentages. Teachers were asked to send in a copy of any such definition of grades that were in use in the school system, but only one or two were sent in."[1]

Several teachers' meetings were held in which reports were given concerning standards. We agreed to have two main divisions of standards, one termed "Standards of Excellence", and the other "Standards of Average". It was planned to scale the rank of A and B on the former, and C, D, and F on the latter. The standards are:

Standards of Excellence

The analysis of work is always in relation to the grade in which the child is working.

I. Reading
1. He enjoys reading.
2. He has a taste for good books and stories.
3. He reads orally in a natural manner.
4. He understands what he reads orally and silently.
5. He reads material which will contribute to his work in other subjects.
6. He attains grade standards in speed and comprehension when tested in silent reading.
7. His skills are of the correct type.
   - (a) He reads by phrases, not words.
   - (b) He does not use his lips in silent reading.
   - (c) His position while reading is correct.
   - (d) His modulation of voice is good.
   - (e) His pronunciation and enunciation are correct.

II. Arithmetic
1. He makes great effort to do his work.
2. He is accurate in his written work.
3. He is neat in his written work.
4. He has a fair amount of speed in his fundamental operations.
5. He can follow directions.
6. He can solve problems.
   - (a) In relation to school activities.
   - (b) Textbook problems.

---

[1] Cecil Warren Bangs--Harry A. Green, Teachers' Marks and the Marking System, University of Iowa Extension Bulletin, No.224, p. 17, May 15, 1930

7. He stands high in his grade test.

III. Geography and History
1. He is growing in ability to study.
2. His understanding of subject matter is developing.
3. He can draw conclusions.
4. He can organize a report.
5. He takes an active and worthwhile part in discussions.
6. He does outside reading on social studies topics.
7. He suggests projects or activities related to the study.
8. He can use reference books for getting information.
9. He finds extra topics or work for himself.
10. His interest in a problem continues for a long period, inside and out.
11. His map work is neat and correct.
12. He understands maps, charts and graphs.

IV. Language
1. He speaks with ease in a connected way before his class.
2. He uses good English in every day talk.
3. He has a good vocabulary for his age.
4. He enunciates clearly.
5. He uses good English in written work.
6. He understands and uses the correct written forms which have been taught him.

V. Spelling
1. He stands high in his daily work.
2. He stands high in reviews.
3. His spelling is good in his written work of all kinds.
4. He makes a good score on standard test.

IV. Drawing--Art
1. He enjoys many kinds of art work.
2. He uses his natural ability for the good of the group.
3. He is neat and helpful in the use of materials.
4. His production improves from week to week.
5. He works to the best of his ability.
6. He has initiative and originality.

V. Music
1. He loves music.
2. He attempts to do all the work.
3. He improves from week to week.
4. He knows the technique of his grade.

VIII. Writing
1. He writes legibly with reasonable speed.
2. His written work is neat.
3. His comprehension with standard scales shows progress.
4. His letter formation is correct.
5. His posture and mechanism are good.

Standards for Average

The analysis of work is always in relation to the grade in which the child is working.

I. Reading
1. He can read orally in a natural way before his class.
2. He has a fair use of the mechanics of reading.
3. He applies the mechanics of reading.
   (a) No lip movement in silent reading.
   (b) Reads more than one word at a glance.
   (c) His pronunciation and enunciation are fair.
4. His reading position is good.
5. He can get information from a reference book when told how and where to get it.
6. He does the assigned lesson.
7. He receives the median score in his grade test.
8. He can give a precis of what has been read.

II. Arithmetic
1. He is usually neat in his work.
2. He can explain some of the problems.
3. He can solve problems with a little help.
4. He is usually accurate in his computation.
5. He has a reasonable amount of speed for his grade.
6. His figures are up to standard.
7. He knows arithmetical terms and signs.

III. Geography and History
1. He does the lesson assigned.
2. He looks up no supplementary material.
3. He brings in material if definitely assigned to bring it in.
4. He finds no extra topics.
5. He needs help in organizing a report.
6. He can use a reference book if told definitely what and where to look it up.
7. He seems to grow slightly in ability to study.
8. His interest in a problem continues only a very short period.
9. He has some understanding of maps, charts and graphs.

IV. Language
1. He has a fair vocabulary for his grade.
2. He can write a fairly interesting composition.
3. He has a fair use of the English language.
4. He does what is required in every-day assignments.
5. He has a median score on the written work presented to his class.

V. Spelling
1. He can spell correctly 2/3 of the words in a test.

VI. Drawing--Art
1. He has ability to accept ideas.
2. He has color sense.
3. He has reached a realistic stage in his work.
4. He can interpret his own ideas through some art medium; clay models, painting, drawing, woodwork.
5. He offers suggestions.
6. He has ability to work in a group.
7. He brings in material if told to do so.

VII. Music
1. He shows some interest in music.
2. He tries to improve his rhythm.
3. He gets an average score on the technique of his grade.
4. He has correct pitch.
A monotone may obtain average if 1/3 may be applied to him.

It took seven weeks to organize these standards. Before the standards were adopted the report cards were issued in the William Carter and Avery Schools for the first time in the school year 1930-1931. Each teacher was somewhat guided in her marking by the teachers' meetings which had already been held. However, there was not any complete uniformity of standards in actual existence when the marks went out for the first time. A graphic distribution of the marks in this first marking period in the year 1930-1931 is given in Fig I on page 31. Note the differences existing in the teachers' marks in this first marking period.

Fig I on page 31 presents the scholarship marks of all pupils in the William Carter and Avery Schools who were marked during the first marking period of the 1930-1931 school year. The distribution for both schools is given in the first graph, the red graph next to it shows a normal distribution for both schools on the basis of ten percent A's, twenty percent B's, forty percent C's, twenty percent D's, and ten percent F's. The letters after the numbers indicate the first initial of each teacher's last name, just as a means of distinguishing one's marks in a specific grade. Below each actual grade distribution is a red graph which represents a normal distribution of the grade on a basis of ten percent A's, twenty percent B's, forty percent C'S, twenty percent D's and ten percent F's. There is only one exception to this procedure where the actual and normal distributions are on a line with each other due to the proportion of the actual distribution in relation to the size of the paper, this has been done in the case of "Grade 6C" in Fig. 1. There is a total of 1,947 marks reported during this period.

In Fig. 1, notice the large number of A's and B's in comparison with the relatively small number of D's and F's.

During the next few weeks the "Standards of Excellence" and "Standards for Average" were put into operation. These standards were carefully explained to the children. Copies of the standards were placed on exhibition in each room and on the bulletin boards of both schools. Many of them were sent home to the parents so "that they would know what their children were

being marked on". Mothers and fathers came to the schools to talk over the uniform standards. Each teacher marked as she saw fit, according to the standards, when the report cards went out for the second time.

The graphic distribution of marks in the second marking period is given in Fig. II on page 31. The first graph represents the actual distribution of marks in the William Carter and Avery Schools for the second marking period in the school year 1930-1931. The red graph next to it represents a normal distribution of marks for this period for both schools on the basis of ten percent A's, twenty percent B's, forty percent C's, twenty percent D's, and ten percent F's. The other graphs indicate the distribution of scholarship marks in each grade. The letters used are the first initials of teachers' names merely to show how they are grouped. Below the graphic representation of teachers' marks is a red graph to show a normal distribution for the group on the basis of ten percent A's, twenty percent B's, forty percent C's, twenty percent D's, and ten percent F's.

There is a total of 2,114 marks reported in Fig. II. This is an increase of 167 marks over the first period. This is due to the fact that a number of our pupils entered school late and were not present long enough during the first marking period to be marked.

1. A correlation of these two marking periods (Fig.I and Fig. II) is given below.

Correlation First and Second Marking Periods[1]

October Frequency		December Frequency	
A	219	A	91
B	702	B	542
C	818	C	898
D	165	D	408
F	43	F	175
Total	1,947	Total	2,114

F.	Rank	F.	Rank	D	D^2
219	3	91	5	2	4
702	2	542	2	0	0
818	1	898	1	0	0
165	4	408	3	1	1
43	5	175	4	1	1
					6

$$P= 1 - \frac{6 D^2}{N(N^2-1)}$$

$$P= 1 - \frac{36}{120}$$

$$P= +.70$$

$$r= +.7167$$

This shows evidence of a marked relationship between these two marking periods. One explanation of this high correlation is that the "Standards of Excellence" and "Standards for Average" were being considered to some degree by the teachers before they were adopted as a guide in marking pupils.

In examining the actual distributions for both schools in Fig.I and Fig. II, note that there is a decrease of 128 A's, 160 B's, and an increase of 80 C's, 243 D's, and 132 F's in the second period (Fig.II) as compared with the marks for the first period (Fig.I). This was accomplished during a period of approximately twelve weeks. One can readily see the effect the uniform "Standards of Excellence" and "Standards for Average" had on the marks

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[1] Spearman's Rank Difference Method

of the teachers. These standards tended to lower pupils' marks. We knew that our newly adopted"standards" would bring about more rigid marking. Three days were set apart to meet parents and discuss marks. Teachers talked over the standards informally with parents. They were shown marking charts such as those on page 31. Each teacher explained that all the teachers had a part in the organizing of new standards. The parents were told that these standards would tend to give us uniformity in marking. This was shown by a comparison of the distributions of marks on the marking charts for two marking periods, one without definite standards - the other using uniform "Standards of Excellence" and "Standards for Average". These standards brought a great many parents to the school who gained a better insight into school life.

Fig. III on page 33 gives a summary of the scholarship marks in the William Carter and Avery Schools at Needham Heights, Mass., for the school year 1930-1931. It shows the distribution of 16.603 marks.

Fig. IV on page 33 gives a total of the scholarship marks for the same schools in the school year 1931-1932. This represents a summary of 16.178 marks.

Both figures show a graphical representation of 32,781 scholarship marks. The red graphs represent normal distribution. The white graphs show the actual distributions. The first graph shows the total distribution for both schools. The remaining graphs are listed according to grade. Each grade has a letter after it to signify the first initial in each teacher's last

FIG I SCHOLARSHIP MARKS FIRST PERIOD 1930-'31

Total number of marks 1947

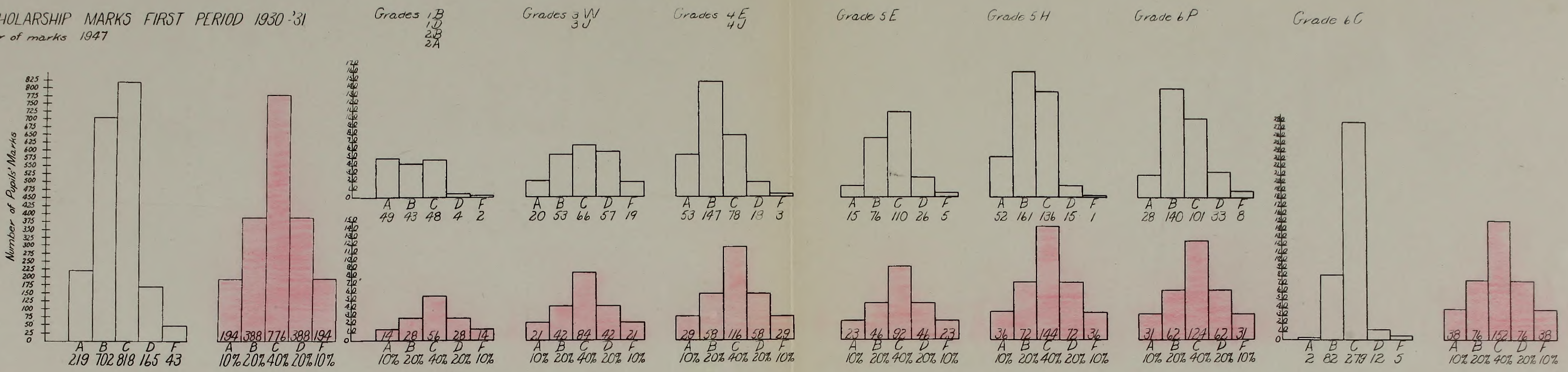
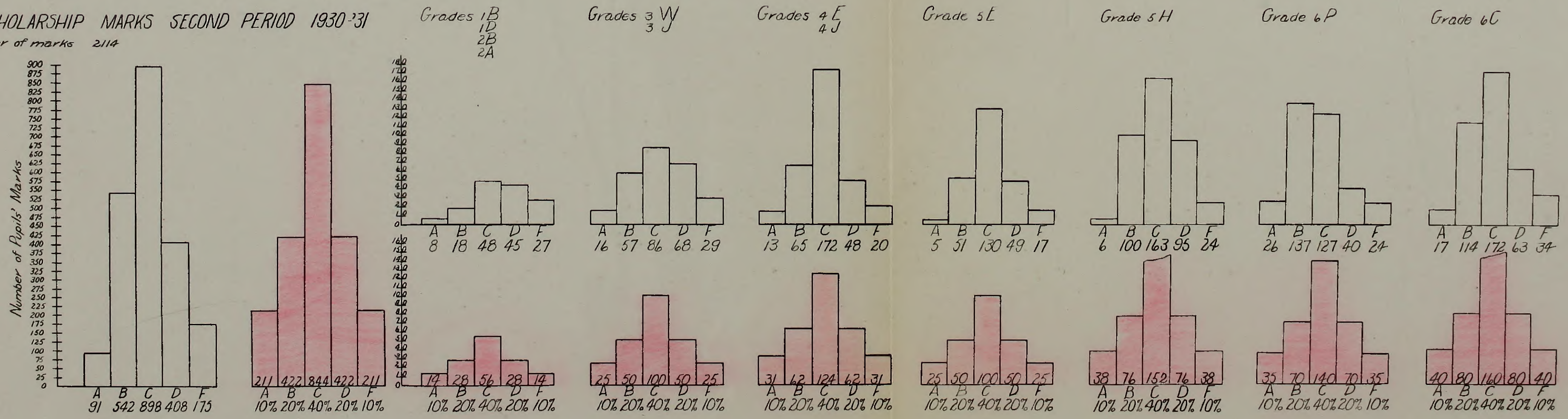


FIG. II SCHOLARSHIP MARKS SECOND PERIOD 1930-'31

Total number of marks 2114



name.

A correlation of the scholarship marks for the two school years 1930-1931 and 1931-1932 is on page 32 (see below). During this period we have had eight new teachers in our teaching unit. We think it safe to assume that the coefficient of correlation would be higher if the "Standards of Excellence" and "Standards for Average" had been in effect two full school years. The standards were not in use when the marks went out for the first time in the school year 1930-1931.

Correlation of Marks for A
Two year Period (1930-1931 and 1931-1932)[1]

1930-31 Frequency	
A	1043
B	4421
C	7092
D	2948
F	1099
Total	16,603

1931-1932 Frequency	
A	894
B	4190
C	6930
D	2859
F	1305
Total	16,178

F.	Rank	F.	Rank	D	D^2
1043	4	894	5	1	1
4421	2	4190	2	0	0
7092	1	6930	1	0	0
2948	3	2859	3	0	0
11099	5	1305	4	1	1
					2

$$P = 1 - \frac{6 D^2}{N(N^2-1)}$$

$$P = 1 - \frac{12}{120}$$

$$P = + .90$$

$$r = + .908$$

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[1] Spearman's Rank Difference Method

FIG III SUMMARY SCHOLARSHIP MARKS 1930-'31

Total number of marks 16,603

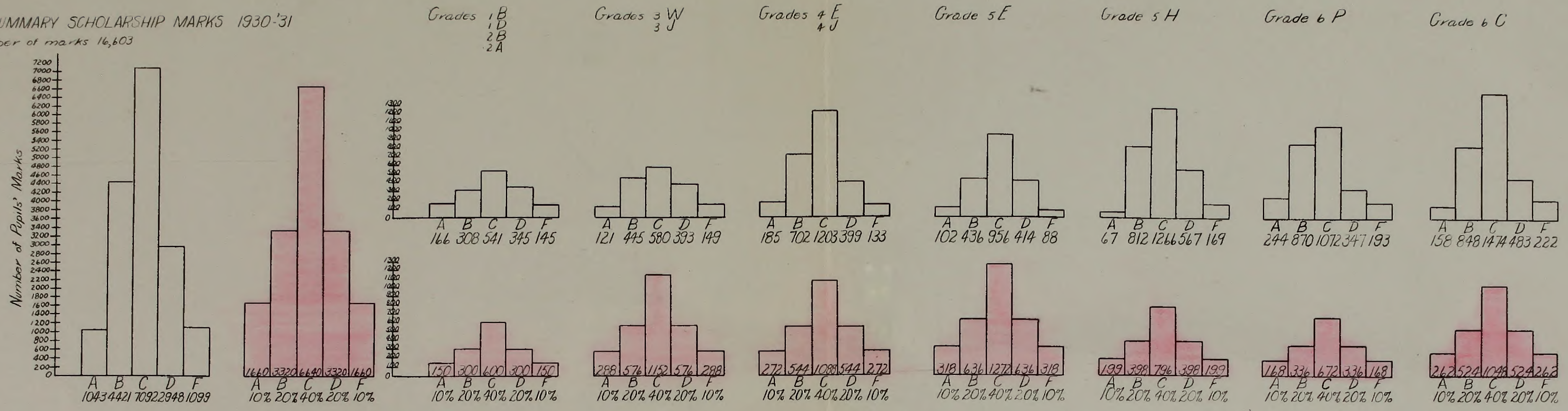
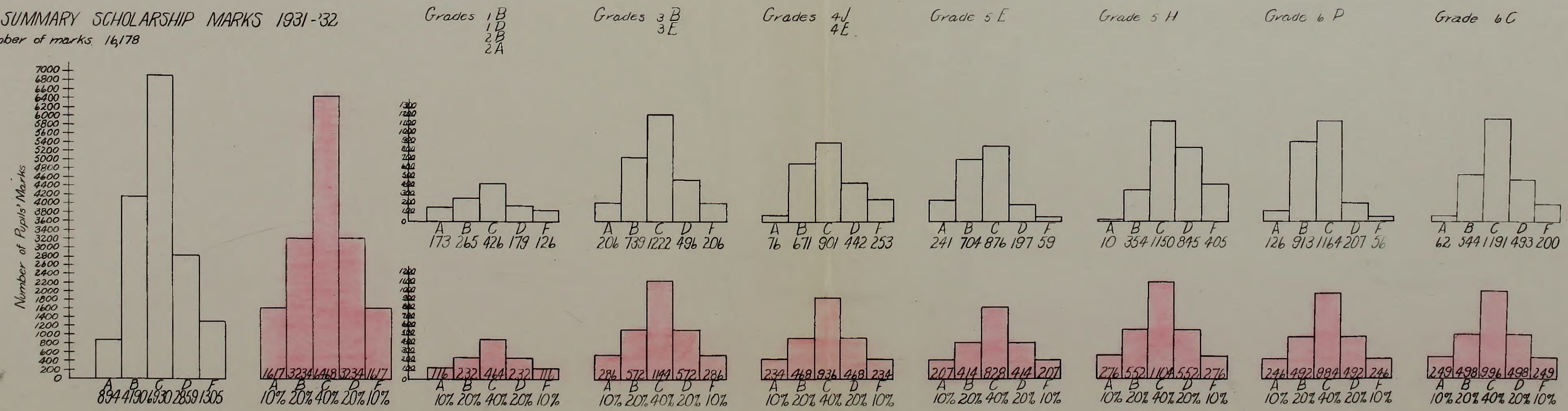


FIG IV SUMMARY SCHOLARSHIP MARKS 1931-'32

Total number of marks 16,178



This very high correlation shows evidence of unusual relationship. The author believes that the "standards" have contributed considerably toward making teachers' marks consistent and reliable over a period of two school years.

Visitors and parents in our schools sometimes ask "Should the normal curve be used as a basis for marking?" We feel that it should. "Research has repeatedly shown that, when fairly large groups are accurately measured, the resulting frequency tables conform to the normal frequency distribution. It follows that, unless all teachers use the normal curve as a guide in their distribution of marks, their marks will not be comparable."[1]

Starch in a discussion of the reducing of the variation in the assigning of marks states that this can be accomplished "by a common sense compliance in the distribution of marks with the normal distribution or probability curve."[2]

Bennett in his comment on the normal distribution states, "It is also true that in any trait or ability there will be in every group not specially selected, a normal distribution: that is, there will be very few of very high ability, more of medium high, a large proportion of average ability, and a similar tapering off at the lower end of the curve."[3]

Rugg in his discussion on the "Percentage of Individuals Theoretically Falling in Each Division" states, "In other words, the writer would prefer to say that one would expect to find from 5 to 10 percent A's, 20 to 25 percent B's, 35 to 40 percent C's, 20 to 25 percent D's, and 5 to 10 percent F's in each reasonably large group of our public-school pupils (say 100 or more)."[4]

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1. I.N. Madsey, To Mark or Not to Mark, Elementary School Journal, Vol. 31, p.747. June 1931
2. Daniel Starch, op.cit., p.448
3. Henry Eastman Bennett, School Efficiency, p.153
4. Harold Rugg, A Primer of Graphics and Statistics, p.76

Marking charts such as those shown on pages 31 and 33, help a great deal in talking over marks with pupils, parents and teachers. After a brief explanation, youngsters can find where they fit in their respective classes. To the parents they show an intelligible picture of the distribution of the schools' marks. This is more important than a discussion which is sometimes meaningless to the parent. To the teacher they are a check against an accepted standard. To the principal they represent the distribution of the teachers' marks.

Ashbaugh states, "The publication of the distribution of teachers' marks in open bulletins, the insistence that each teacher tabulate and plot her distribution of marks before submitting them to the office -- all these have been recommended in previous articles and they are of value."[1]

Starch states, "To this end the administrator of a school should tabulate at stated intervals the marks assigned by each teacher and exhibit the tabulation to the teachers. This in itself will usually lead without request or compulsion to a very considerable correction of aberrations on the part of those teachers who deviate most widely."[2]

In the William Carter and Avery Schools the graphs are plotted, exhibited, and discussed in teachers' meetings. One must always be careful to see that teachers definitely understand just what is being done. It is also very important to discourage all attempts at curve fixing. In our experience with the application of the normal curve we have never had any evidence of this sort of thing.

The children in these schools come from Polish, Lithuanian, Russian, Armenian, Italian, Czech-Slovakian, and American homes. They represent a cosmopolitan school.

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[1] E. J. Ashbaugh, op. cit., p.198
[2] Daniel Starch, op. cit., p.448

Chapter III

Revision of the Report Card from the Traditional Form to the Newer Type in a Rural Community

In Connecticut there are several small towns which are grouped together in districts for what is commonly known as "state supervision" which comes under the classification of "Field Service" - "Division of Rural Education". There are five towns in the lower part of the Connecticut River Valley which are under "state supervision" from the standpoint of education. They are Essex, Deep River, Westbrook, Chester and Old Saybrook. All these towns are supervised by Mr. William M. Strong, Field Supervisor of Rural Education and Miss Alice O'Neill, Assistant Supervisor of Rural Education under the direction of the State Board of Education.

During the past four years there have been changes in the type of report card used in the elementary schools in the five towns listed above. In the school year 1930-1931 a traditional type report was used. It was issued four times a year. The form was a white card seven and a quarter inches long and five and one eighth inches wide. A copy of it is given on page 37.

When this traditional type report was in use parents complained because they had to wait approximately ten weeks to know the marks their youngsters were going to receive. Parents thought that they were entitled to a report on their children before the regular report card was issued. To meet this need a "Deficiency Report" was made up in teachers' meetings at Essex

Connecticut. This mimeographed sheet was sent home three weeks in advance of the report card. It was used for pupils who were failing in school subjects. A copy of the form used in the school year 1930-1931 is presented in the second diagram listed below: see page 38.

I. ESSEX SCHOOLS (Traditional report form)[1]

"The Home and the School Should Work Together for the Good of the Child"

Report of____________________192___192___Grade_______

Four Reporting Periods	Days Absent	Times Tardy	Conduct	Effort	Reading	Language	Arithmetic	History	Geography	Spelling	Physical Educ.	Hygiene	Penmanship	Citizenship	Music	Drawing	Parents or Guardians Sign Below Each Quarter Upon Examining This Report.
First Quarter																	
Second Quarter																	
Third Quarter																	
Fourth Quarter																	
Year Av.																	

Explanation: A Excellent, 90-100. B Good, 80-89. C Fair, 70-79. D Failure.

Parents are cordially invited to confer with the teacher or principal.

Signature of Teacher________________

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[1] Elementary School Report Card, Board of Education., Essex, Conn.

II. Deficiency Report[1] Date..........

"This is to notify you that..........................is not doing satisfactory work in..........................due perhaps to the causes checked below:

Is not ready for this grade.
Has great difficulty in learning.
Is immature for his age.
Is inattentive.
Disturbs others.
Is lazy.
Seems to have insufficient sleep.
Is not in good physical condition.
Seems to need medical attention.
Is too young for the grade.
Has a very small English vocabulary.
Is absent frequently.
Does not do his homework.

The school is interested, as you are, in trying to make it possible for this child to make normal progress through the school. Will it not be possible for you to visit the school, observe what your child is doing in classes, and then talk the matter over with the teacher after school? Such a visit and conference, in many cases, gives an understanding of the pupil's problems which makes it possible for school and home to cooperate more fully and successfully in the education of the child.

.......................Teacher.

Please sign and return to the teacher.

I have received the deficiency report on.............,
dated...............

Parent's Signature.............................."

The teachers and parents became conscious of the need for a new report card. Several teachers' meetings were held to talk over report cards. Here (page 39) is a copy of a letter which was sent to all elementary schools in the district.[2]

---

1. William M. Strong, Field Supervisor of Rural Educ., Essex, Conn.
2. Personal letter from William M. Strong dated October 31,1932

Essex, Conn.
Oct. 31, 1932

"To All Elementary Teachers in Old Saybrook, Westbrook, Essex, Chester, and Deep River:

Much work has been done on the proposed changes in report cards. Miss O'Neill has met with nearly all teachers and has pooled the results of these meetings and office conferences. The inclosed suggested report forms are the results. Will you consider these carefully and report your conclusions at the meetings to be held as follows:

Mon. Oct. 31 - ESSEX - Report Cards - 3:45
Tues. Nov. 1 - CHESTER - Report Cards - 3:45
Wed. Nov. 2 - OLD SAYBROOK - Report Cards - 3:15
Wed. Nov. 2 - WESTBROOK - Report Cards - 4:00
Thur. Nov. 3 - DEEP RIVER - Report Cards - 3:20

Will you also consider the possible changes in the present cards - by crossing out existing factors, bracketing, etc., which might be used if funds are not available for new cards.

Very truly yours,

W. Strong"

These meetings held in Essex, Chester, Old Saybrook, Westbrook and Deep River resulted in a new report card to take the place of the traditional form listed on page 37. Essex and Westbrook used the new report card during the school year 1931-1932. The other three towns did not adopt the new card. This form was printed on blue cardboard. It was seven inches long and six and one eighth inches wide. It was folded into a booklet made up of four pages. A copy of the contents is listed here by pages:

Page one[1]

"For use in grades 3 to 8[1]

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

of

Westbrook, Conn,

School Report of____________________________________

at the________________________________School

for the year 193 -3

____
Teacher's signature

To The Parents:

This card presents to you a record of the progress of your child in school. Education includes many things and takes place everywhere. The schools are held largely responsible for the development and training in scholarship--hence you have a "Scholarship" report. The school recognizes that it is helping the home in the development of the child, through encouraging the practise of desirable habits and attitudes--hence you have a "Habits and Attitudes" Report.

After examining this report will you sign and return it promptly to the school? Your signature indicates merely that you have examined the report.

Your schools are open for visitation at all times. You will be welcomed there at any time to observe the school at work. Teachers are at liberty for conferences with parents after school hours.

Yours truly,

Wm. Strong, Supt.

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[1] Report Card used in grades 3-8, Public Schools, Westbrook and Essex, Connecticut.

Page two

"Desirable Habits and Attitudes

	1	2	3	4
1. Is Courteous				
2. Uses Initiative				
3. Is Prompt				
4. Works well with others				
5. Is Self reliant				
6. Is Persistent				
7. Is Doing his best				
8. Is Clean in Speech				
9. Is Neat				

A mark like this x means that progress is unsatisfactory.

ATTENDANCE RECORD

	1	2	3	4
Days Absent				
Times Tardy				

Parent's Signature

First Period...............................
Second Period..............................
Third Period...............................
Fourth Period.............................."

Page three

"SCHOLARSHIP

	1	2	3	4	Final Mark
Physical Education					
Grammar					
Composition- Oral					
Written					
Spelling					
Reading- Silent					
Oral					
Arithmetic					
Social Studies- Geography					
History					
Civics					
Writing					
Art and Handwork					
Music					
Hygiene					
Science or Nature Study					
Prospect of Promotion					

Explanation of Marks: A-Excellent; B-Good; C-Fair; D-Unsatisfactory; F-Failure."

Page four

"PROMOTION RECORD

Date..................

....

is promoted to the.....................Grade.

.....................................Teacher."

In the school year 1931-1932 the "Deficiency Report" which is listed on page 38 was revised. This was done through cooperation of teachers and parents. The revised form is as follows:[1]

Deficiency Report Date..............

"This is to notify you that.........................is not making satisfactory progress in the..................grade, probably due to the causes checked below:

1. Too young for the grade.
2. Immature for his age.
3. Lazy.
4. Inattentive.
5. Seems to have insufficient sleep.
6. Lacks muscular control.
7. Speaks a foreign language at home.
8. Nervous.
9. Wishes to attract attention.
10. Has a speech difficulty.
11. Disturbs others.
12. Too irregular in attendance.
13. Seems to need medical attention.
14. Lack of ability to express himself.
15. Speech difficulty.
16. Cannot work without help.
17. Poor work in study habits.
18. Does not take part in class discussion.

The school is interested, as you are, in trying to make it possible for this child to make normal progress through the school. Will it not be possible for you to visit the school, observe what your child is doing in classes and then talk the matter over with the teacher after school? Such a visit and conference, in many cases, gives an understanding of the pupil's problems which makes it possible for school and home to cooperate more fully and successfully in the education of the child.

.......................Teacher.

Please sign and return to the teacher.

I have received the deficiency report on............. dated.........................."

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[1] William M. Strong, op. cit.

The new form was used in the schools of Westbrook and Essex for a period of two years. This report form brought with it certain obstacles in the way of interpretation. To clarify the new card certain changes were made in the card itself. This letter explains the first revision of the new card:[1]

Essex, Conn.
Nov. 16, 1932

"To Essex Teachers:

The first cards for 1932-33, grades 3-8, will be sent home the week of November 21, 1932.

The Report Card is one of the agencies provided by the school for the purpose of reporting to parents the progress of their children in school.

The School being concerned with the all around development of the child has evolved, with your assistance, a card which makes provision for the reporting to the parents the child's in school progress in the development of desirable habits and attitudes as well as his progress in scholarship.

The report card should serve as a means of bringing teacher and pupil together in the evaluating of the pupil's work. Most pupils are or can be as sincerely interested in their progress and development as is the teacher or the parent. No child desires to be a tail ender - no child is a tail ender in everything. At times the difficulty in finding a child's point of excellence is great. But once found it is a sure firm foundation upon which he can build strongly and surely. The child grows daily in school - he has daily opportunities to measure himself. We have a big opportunity to help him recognize and use these frequently. Thus doing the "report" is a summary made by the teacher thoroughly understood by both teacher and pupil, capable of clearer interpretation by both pupil and teacher to parents. No report card should be a disappointing shock. Thus reports to parents become more valuable.

The new card which has been in use some two years, while a marked improvement over cards previously used, has presented certain problems of interpretation to both teachers and parents.

Therefore the following changes will be made on the present cards for 1932-33:

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[1] Personal letter, William M. Strong, dated November 16, 1932

Front - After writing in the pupil's name add grade( ).
Desirable Habits and Attitudes.
Strike out ("A mark like this x, etc.")
Use - Yes, meaning this child
"Is courteous", etc.
- No, meaning this child
"Is not courteous", etc.

Where no mark is inserted the pupil's development is average. The pupil should know what these comments mean and particularly wherein he is deficient and how he can improve.

Scholarship - Cross out Fair write "Average" below it.
Cross out Unsatisfactory write "Poor" below it.

Essex Teachers:

These marks will mean exactly what the words imply to teachers and parents and are to be used by the teachers on the basis of a reasonable standard for each given grade.

Teachers in grades 3-6 may bracket as illustrated:
Grammar -)
Composition -)
Oral -)
Written -)
and give the pupil one mark in this field.

Teachers in grades 3-8 may bracket as illustrated:
Geography -)
History -)
Civics -)
and give the pupil one mark in this field.

Teachers may mark out either Science or Nature Study leaving the other and marking in this.

Prospect of Promotion - no mark will be given in this at the first marking period, therefore put a cross in the square following Prospect of Promotion and under 1.

Physical Education covers Play activities of the child on the playground and in the classroom.

Language -(Grammar, Composition, Oral Written) includes not only the formal study of these subjects and applications in drill periods but all of the writing and speaking which the child does in all activities.

Spelling - includes use of spelling in writing a history story or a letter as well as the formal learning, testing, and drill work in spelling.

Reading - includes application of reading skills in all school work as well as in formal reading periods.
Arithmetic - includes ability to use numbers outside of the arithmetic class as well as in it.
Social Studies - includes not only the ability to learn facts and return them but also the ability to find and use them.
Writing - is an all time school activity embracing neatness and clarity of arithmetic papers and notebooks as well as the writing exercise.
Art and Handwork - includes the work done in the regular art and handwork periods and also the work of this kind carried on by the pupil at other times during the day.
Music - applies to school vocal music and appreciation and should give credit for growing appreciation as well as skill. The boy who can not sing may still do a creditable piece of work in research, notebooks, construction.
Hygiene - covers the teaching and use of health habits.
Science or Nature Study - are clearly designated by their names."

These changes were carefully explained to the children and their parents. The parents were reached through meetings of the Parent-Teachers' Association which are well attended. This revision of the new report form was made possible through the cooperation of parent, teacher, and school officials.

While this new card was being used in Essex, and Westbrook, parents and teachers in the neighboring towns of Old Saybrook, Deep River and Chester watched the reaction with great interest. The people in these towns visit each other considerably. Perhaps there is not any better common ground than a report card. Soon the people in the three towns where the traditional card shown on page 37 was in use began to ask questions about the possibilities of a new report for their towns.

The teachers in Westbrook and Essex were ready to do more along the line of report cards. The teachers in Chester, Deep River and Old Saybrook were convinced that their communities were ready to accept a new type report card. Groups of teachers gathered together in meetings, to organize a new report form.

Several types were presented. Typewritten copies of suggested report card forms were given to mothers and fathers through mothers' clubs, room clubs, and the Parent-Teacher Association.

The first forms brought two distinct divisions in the grades. One form was given for grades three and four.[1]

3-4

"Desirable Habits and Attitudes

Yes = Well Developed. No = Poorly Developed.

	Nov.	Feb.	Apr.	June
He is working as well as he can---------				
He gives worthwhile ideas to the class--				
He can plan good work for himself-------				
He works well with others---------------				
He is courteous to other children-------				
He takes good care of books, desks, etc.				
He is usually clean and neat------------				

Health as Observed in School

Nov. Good work in

Needs to improve in

Feb. Good work in

Needs to improve in

Apr. Good work in

Needs to improve in

Prospect of Promotion

June Good work in

Needs to improve in "

---

1. Report Form, Teachers' Meeting, Essex, Conn.

The second form was for use in grades five through eight:[1]

5-8
"Desirable Habits and Attitudes
Yes = Well Developed. No = Poorly Developed.

	Nov.	Feb.	Apr.	June
He is working as well as he can.				
He gives worthwhile ideas to the class.				
He can plan good work for himself.				
He works well with others.				
He plays well with others.				
He is courteous to other children.				
He takes good care of books, desks, etc.				
He is usually clean and neat.				

Health as Observed in School

G = Good; A = Average; F = Poor; P = Passing.

English				
Reading				
Social Studies				
Science & Health				
Arithmetic				
Spelling				
Art & Handwork				
Prospect of Promotion				

Attendance Record

	N.	F.	A.	J.
Days Absent				
Times Tardy				

---

1. Ibid.

Both of these forms have the same material listed on the back.[1]

"Attendance Record   Parent's Signature

	Nov.	Feb.	Apr.	June
Days Absent				
Times Tardy				

Nov. ______________________

Feb. ______________________

Apr. ______________________

Promotion Record

Date ______________________

______________________ is promoted to the

______________ Grade.

______________________ Teacher.

Report of ____________________ Year ____________ Grade ______

______________________ Teacher.

You are asked to examine this report and to sign in the proper place. Your signature shows only that you have seen the card. If you have questions, regarding your child's progress in school, the teacher will be glad to discuss them with you any afternoon after school."

These last two forms have never been used. As a result of the study and discussion of these "temporary forms" the report card used in grades three through eight are the same in all five towns. The forms used in grades three and four:[1]

"Desirable Habits and Attitudes

Yes = Well Developed. No = Poorly Developed

No Mark Means Average	Nov	Feb.	Apr.	June
He has good work habits.				
He gives worthwhile ideas to the class.				
He can plan good work for himself.				
He works well with others.				
He plays well with others.				
He is courteous to other children.				
He takes good care of books, desk, etc.				
He is usually clean and neat.				

____

____

Health as Observed in School

Nov. ____________________________________

Feb. ____________________________________

Nov. Good work in____________________________

Needs to improve in________________________

____

Feb. Good work in____________________________

Needs to improve in________________________

____

Prospect of Promotion______________________

Apr. Good work in____________________________

Needs to improve in________________________

____

Prospect of Promotion______________________

June Good work in____________________________

Needs to improve in________________________

____

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[1] Ibid.

Boston University
School of Education
Library

In grades five and six this type is used:[1]

"Desirable Habits and Attitudes

Yes = Well Developed. No = Poorly Developed.

No Mark Means Average.	Nov.	Feb.	Apr.	June
He has good work habits.				
He gives worthwhile ideas to the class.				
He can plan good work for himself.				
He works well with others.				
He plays well with others.				
He is courteous to otherchildren.				
He takes good care of books, desk, etc.				
He is usually clean and neat.				

Health as Observed in School

Nov. ____________________

Feb. ____________________

G = Good Av = Average P = Poor

	Nov	Feb	Apr	June
Reading				
Social Studies				
English				
Arithmetic				
Spelling				
Art & Handwork				
Physical Education				
Prospect of Promotion				

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1. Ibid.

This form is for grades seven and eight:[1]

"Desirable Habits and Attitudes
Yes = Well Developed. No = Poorly Developed.

No Mark Means Average.	Nov.	Feb.	Apr.	June
He has good work habits.				
He gives worthwhile ideas to the class.				
He can plan good work for himself.				
He works well with others.				
He plays well with others.				
He is courteous to other children.				
He takes good care of books, desk, etc.				
He is usually clean and neat.				

Health as Observed in School

Nov. ______________________________

Feb. ______________________________

G = Good Av = Average P = Poor

	Nov	Feb	Apr	June		Nov	Feb	Apr	June
Composition Oral					Arithmetic				
Written					Spelling				
Grammar					Writing				
Reading Silent					Art & Handwork				
Oral					Phys. Educ.				
Social Studies					Music				
					Prospect of Prom.				

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1. Ibid.

On the back of each form for all grades the contents concerning "Attendance Record" - "Parent's Signature" -"Promotion Record" and advice to parents are the same.[1]

"Attendance Record

	Nov.	Feb.	Apr.	Jun.	
Days Absent					Nov.
Times Tardy					Feb.
					Apr.

Promotion Record

Old Saybrook, Conn., ____________________

______________ is promoted to the ________ grade.

______________________ Teacher

OLD SAYBROOK, CONN.

Report of ______________________ Year ________ Grade _____

______________________ Teacher

This card presents to you a record of the progress of your child in school. Education includes many things and takes place everywhere. The schools are held largely responsible for the development and training in scholarship - hence you have a "Scholarship" report. The school recognizes that it is helping the home in the development of the child, through encouraging the practise of desirable habits and attitudes - hence you have a "Habits and Attitudes" report.

After examining this report will you sign it and return it promptly to the school? Your signature indicates merely that you have examined the report.

Your schools are open for visitation at all times. You will be welcomed there at any time to observe the school at work. Teachers are at liberty for conferences with parents after school hours.

Wm. Strong, Supt.

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[1] Ibid.

This letter explains the new type report form to the teachers:[1]

Essex, Conn.
Nov. 9, 1933

"To All Elementary School Teachers:

Regarding: Report Cards

I. The Report Card is one of the agencies provided by the school for the purpose of reporting to parents the progress of their children in school.

II. The School being concerned with the all around development of the child has evolved, with your assistance a card which makes provision for the reporting to the parents the child's in school progress in the development of desirable habits and attitudes as well as his progress in acholarship.

III. Desirable Habits and Attitudes:
This part of the card should be *filled out* by the teacher *in conference with the pupil*. The pupil should know what these comments mean, particularly wherein he is deficient and *how he can improve*.

IV. Scholarship rating:
G = Good Av = Average P = Poor

These marks will mean exactly what the words imply to teachers, parents and pupils and are to be used by the teachers on the basis of a reasonable standard for each given grade.
Note: Where a pupil in grade 7 is doing grade 5 work in Reading - the teacher should write in following Reading Grade 5 and give that pupil credit through his marks for the quality of work he is doing in the subject on the basis of Grade 5.
In every grade there are pupils doing work which is clearly two or more years below standard - these should be noted.

These teacher ratings in Scholarship should not be a shock to the child. He should know frequently where he stands - he should be encouraged to frequent accurate self evaluation of his work. Wherever possible teachers should have concrete evidence of pupils' abilities as marked - i.e., papers, reports, test results.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION covers the work of the child on the playground and in the gymnasium and the study and application of hygiene.

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[1] Personal letter, William M. Strong, dated November 9, 1933

LANGUAGE OR ENGLISH (Grammar, Composition oral and written) includes not only the formal study of these subjects and applications in drill periods but all of the writing and speaking which the child does in all school activities.
SPELLING includes use of spelling in writing a history story, or a letter, as well as the formal learning, testing and drill work in spelling.
READING includes application of reading skills in all school work as well as in formal reading periods.
ARITHMETIC includes ability to use numbers outside of the arithmetic class as well as in it.
SOCIAL STUDIES includes not only the ability to learn facts and return them but also the ability to find them and use them.
WRITING, too, is an all time school activity embracing neatness and clarity of arithmetic papers and notebooks as well as the writing exercise.
ART AND HANDWORK as their names imply - pupils should be encouraged to apply their art in many fields and should receive credit for such applications.
MUSIC applies to school vocal music, appreciation and should give credit for growing appreciation as well as skill. The boy who can not sing is a monotone, but may still do a creditable piece of work in research, notebooks, construction.
SCIENCE OR NATURE STUDY are clearly designated by their names.

The report card should serve as a means of bringing teacher and pupil together in the evaluating of the pupil's work. Most pupils are or can be as sincerely interested in their progress and development as teacher and parent. No child desires to be a tail ender - no child is a tail ender in everything. At times the difficulty in finding a child's point of excellence is great. But once found it is a sure firm foundation upon which he can build strongly and surely. The child grows daily in school - he has daily opportunities to measure himself. We have a big opportunity to help him recognize and use these frequently. Thus doing the "report" is but a summary, honestly arrived at by the pupil with the teacher, understood by both, capable of clearer interpretation by both pupil and teacher, to parents. Thus no report card is a disappointing shock. Thus reports to parents become more valuable.

How much farther can we go along this road of reporting in 1933-34?"

This district of five towns does not issue a report card in grades one and two. The personal letter is used in these grades for youngsters who are not doing satisfactory work.

A mimeographed slip of paper is used for the early part of the second grade. If a youngster is not fairly adjusted to the grade after a six week period a slip is sent home, followed by a personal letter, a conference, or a home call. [1]

"This is to inform you that______________________________ is not making a successful beginning in second grade work.

_______________________Teacher"

Concerning a continual revision of the report card Mr. Strong declared that the school committees in the five towns were willing to use the report card in the revised form without a great deal of discussion about the matter at that time. Later he stated that perhaps the next step would be suggestions for the parents to help. His question in his letter listed on page 56 "How much farther can we go along this road of reporting in 1933-34?" leads me to think that this continued revision of the report card will be satisfactorily accomplished in this district.

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1. Used in Grade Two, Grammar School, Essex, Conn.

Chapter IV

Substitutions for Marks

Parents have interested me in their frankness in the discussion of marks on report cards. Occasionally a father or a mother asks the "how" of the mark. One of my hardest tasks has been to show how a pupil gets an A or a B. The subjective element is so great that an explanation of a designated mark means nothing. After discussing marks with many parents and teachers we have come to the conclusion that the marks as they are generally given mean nothing but a personal estimation of a child by a teacher who sometimes has standards which are both objective and subjective.

Reeder in a discussion concerning marks states: "Grading should be more instructive and less judicial. It is of little consequence to the pupil or anyone else whether he gets a 'perfectly fair mark' or any mark at all, but it is vitally important that he be helped to remedy each fault as economically and as permanently as possible. Pupils and parents may demand exact grades but pupils and parents take their cue from the customs of the school. When we have with sufficient clearness laid our emphasis upon the correcting of specific faults and the developing of definite abilities and have reorganized our school traditions accordingly, there will be the same demand for these on the part of parents. Accurate in all the fundamentals and in the use of the decimal point is just as stimulating and far more exact a grade than B plus or 91.75 percent."[1]

Bennett writing on the method of emphasizing marks states: "......or for emphasis some teachers were prone to give AA or possibly FF -- whatever these could precisely mean."[2]

Culp writing on "The Truth About Marks" tells us: "Unless the schools wake up of their own accord the parents will soon ask that imagination, guesswork, and deliberate 'fixing' be relegated to the sphere of things condemned."[3]

As far back as 1894, White in his "School Management" wrote: "If 100 percent were a chosen idol, and teachers and pupils were devout idolaters the worship of this percentage god

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1. Ward G. Reeder, op. cit., p. 157
2. Henry Eastman Bennett, op. cit., p. 152
3. V. H. Culp, "The Truth About Marks", Journal of Education,
   - Vol. 114, p. 364

would not be more zealous, or, we may add, more harmful, than it is in many schools. What the schools imperatively need is more vital teaching and less marking and bookkeeping."[1]

Fowler says: "That he would abolish school marks because they tell nothing about the child's real ability or progress and provide unworthy motives for learning."[2]

Often we hear the statement: "A child's mark is his pay for his work. That is just what a mark is -- the profit motive in education. It is paying a child to do what he should otherwise want to do for the sheer satisfaction of learning. A child is naturally curious. He wants to know the why of everything. This native curiosity is the basis of his education. Yet deliberately and painstakingly in our schools we destroy this learning drive with our marks, rewards, cups, buttons, honor rolls, penalties and every other conceivable kind of artificial incentive. Schools are shot through with artificiality. The school mark is the most pernicious of all. It is harmful because it gets such easy results. A mark of 'seventy-five per cent' or 'C' in reading is so convenient for the teacher and so readily understood by the parent. In a class of thirty pupils, all similarly price-marked, you can easily tell exactly what the relative worth of each child is in that subject. When it is neatly written on a report card the parent can beam approvingly or hit the roof, depending on the parental disposition and his standard of success. It gives Father a chance to say threateningly,'Bring that mark up by next Friday night or you don't go to the Navy game', or 'If you get 90 next time, I'll give you a dollar'-- it works.

But what does it do to the child? If he is a bright boy he smiles grimly and says to himself, 'All right, I'll give them what they want. I'll kid the teacher. I'll play up to her hobbies, I'll do well what is expected -- no more. I'll cheat. I'll copy. I'll get good marks, since that's what this education business seems to consist of.' He will do what you and I did in school, what thousands of boys and girls are being taught all over this fair land of ours to do -- that is, beat the game.

Furthermore, what does seventy-five per cent in reading really tell the parent about the progress of his child? Does it tell whether he likes reading, whether he reads with greater speed and comprehension than last month? Does it tell whether he reads with discrimination, somethings accurately and others with speed to get the story or gist? Can he use the dictionary? Does he read orally with expression and clear enunciation? Does it reveal his ability to read in varying fields, such as poetry, drama, fiction and biography? Does it indicate good reading habits, such as rhythmic eye-movements, freedom from lip movements, and so forth? It does nothing of the kind. It says that the child got seventy-five per cent in reading, nothing else."[3]

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1. Emerson E. White, School Management, p. 154
2. Burton P. Fowler, How Much Do School Marks Matter? - The Parent's Magazine, January 1933, p. 12
3. Ibid.

In a summary of his article on school marks Fowler states: "School marks should be abolished with all the other paraphernalia of an antiquated, competitive, and artificial educational machine. They should be abolished because they make children feel inferior (or superior), encourage dishonesty, give a feeling of insecurity, dull the edge of intellectual curiosity, make children course-passers instead of learners, and provide in general unworthy motives for hard work. In their place let us substitute really human records worthy of an age that professes to revere the rights of childhood, records that reveal latent abilities that encourage children and parents instead of jealousies, heartaches and futile, selfish strivings for unattainable goals."[1]

The city of Newton, Massachusetts recently abolished marks and report cards in the elementary and junior high school. A letter was sent home to parents who have children in the elementary and junior high schools. A copy of the letter sent "To Parents of Elementary School Children" is given below:[2]

NEWTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Newtonville, Mass.

October 1933

"To Parents of Elementary School Children:

Newton schools rank high among those of cities of similar size because at no time has an opportunity been lost to make changes in the organization when the change would better the individual pupil. After a number of months of study the teachers, in conjunction with principals and the superintendent, have decided to do away with the old marking system.

During the past decade, educators, parents, and many pupils have questioned the value of marks. Scores of experiments have been tried which definitely prove the following facts:

1. Marks are unfair to the child.
2. They foster unhealthy competition.
3. Marks do not give parents any important knowledge of their children.

As a part of the plan, new types of testing procedure will give the parents a better knowledge of the child's progress, and the teacher an opportunity to render a greater service in

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[1] Ibid.
[2] Letter, Newton School Department, Newtonville, Mass., dated October 1933

accordance with the individual needs and capacity of the child.

The child's success or failure will be his secret, shared only by himself, his teacher and his parents. The parents will receive word twice a year of the progress and achievement of their children, more frequently, if conference is necessary. Parents may arrange for conference at any time.

Under the new system, there will be no lowering of standards. Each child will be encouraged to work to the limit of his ability and capacity.

It is our belief that school work will become more vital and meaningful than ever before in the absence of artificial awards and honors.

We shall appreciate your continued interest and co-operation.

Miss Heloise Chase	Miss Alice J. Kennedy
Miss Mary Cleveland	Miss Mary Gianferante
Mr. Haydn Pearson	Miss Maude E. Stewart

Committee

Approved:
John Lund,
Superintendent."

Committees of teachers and principals have been formed to help the teachers in the executing of the underlying principles of a no marks and no report cards system. Teachers were encouraged to ask questions relative to the substitutions for marks and the new system in general. The committees met and presented answers to a variety of questions. Some of these questions and answers are:[1]

"What scheme of recording daily papers and recitations will be used? May each teacher develop his or her own system or will a uniform system be adopted?

Answer: "The Committe recommends that teachers do not use letters or per cents but that they keep records in the form of notes on progress. (No grade or mark, meaning letters or per cents shall be placed on a child's paper)."

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[1] General Information Relative to the Revision of the Marking System in the Elementary and Junior High School, Bulletin No.1, p.1, Ways and Means Committee, Newton Public Schools, Newton, Mass.

"Shall we write favorable or unfavorable comments on pupils' papers?"

Answer: "Written material in the form of daily work, compositions, etc., should bear pertinent and constructive criticism relative to the pupil's apparent strengths as well as weaknesses. Avoid unfavorable comments like 'very poor'. Say rather 'You need much help in.......... etc."

"How shall we correct papers so that pupils may understand where their mistakes are?"

Answer: "Errors should be marked clearly with any positive and specific comment which will help the pupil to understand his difficulty."

" When John asks us, 'Am I doing passing work?' or 'How do I stand', what shall we say? On what shall we base our answers? We can't rely on memory of daily recitations."

Answer: "No reference should be made to the terms referred to by either of the terms 'passing' or 'not passing'. Tell the pupil the facts of the case in terms of constructive statements. The teacher may say to the pupil, 'You are doing a good piece of work'; 'Your work in English is exceptionally fine'. In the lower grades the explanation must be couched in such terms as will be understood by the younger child."

"Does this lack of marking make the pupils do better work or does it make them grow careless?"

Answer: "There is not to be a lack of'marking.' There should be more marking in the sense of correction. This again is a matter of the ability of the teacher to meet the situation which was just as common with A, B, and C, etc., as it is without. The appeal of the teacher, personal contact with the pupil and the home should greatly lessen this condition. It must be expected, however, that in the cases of a few individuals the change will have a negative effect but this will be only a temporary situation at best and should disappear when all the details of the plan are in full operation. In passing, it is interesting to note that the operation of the primary grades (1, 2, 3) without traditional marks and report cards for the past two years has produced no undesirable effect, but quite to the contrary the 'tone' of the schools and grades affected has been heightened."

"Is it possible to depend wholly upon the innate desire to learn on the part of the child without any form of artificial stimulation or incentive?"

Answer: "Work should be made sufficiently interesting to stimulate such a desire. Teachers must be alert to allure a pupil where and when he is inclined to shirk." [1]

"What will be the status of the achievement tests under the new plan?"

Answer: "Wider use of achievement tests will be made both of the published tests and those prepared by various departments."[2]

The next month another bulletin was issued on a question and answer basis. Here are additional questions and answers:

"Some parents will insist upon asking if their children are passing in a subject. What answer shall we give them?"

Answer: "There will undoubtedly be some parents who will insist upon wanting to know whether a pupil has 'passed' or 'not passed'. The teacher may say in this event that if the pupil continues his present rate of educational growth he will, by the end of the year, have completed sufficient work to warrant his going on with the group or subject. If the parent still insists upon the use of the terms 'passing' or not'passing' he is to be told that we are no longer using these terms however, they may so interpret what has been said if they so wish."[2]

"When a class exercise or unit of work with a certain definite number of questions or examples is given, is it contrary to the new plan to place upon the papers correctly answered, as for example (3x) (17c); (5x) (15c) or (7x) (13c)?"

Answer: "Any methods used to indicate the number of problems, sentences or words that are right and wrong at the top of the paper is not in harmony with the new plan. There seems to be no necessity for marking 'rights' by 'C' or other device. 'Wrongs' should be indicated, stating also why it is wrong, when it is feasible to do so."[3]

"An answer in the first bulletin states that no letters shall be placed upon a child's paper. Does this mean that we may not place a large capital C standing for correct on a paper

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1. Ibid. p. 3
2. Ibid. p. 7
3. Supplementary Questions Relative to the Revision of the Marking System in the Elem. & Jr. High Schools, Bulletin No.2, p. 4, Ways and Means Comm., Newton Public Schools, Newton, Mass.
4. Ibid. p. 5

that is entirely correct?" [1]

Answer: "If it is understood that the capital C is merely a means of indicating a paper free of errors and does not represent a grade, it may be used. It is recommended, however, that such devices as the check or teacher's initials be used in its place, since in these devices there is no carry-over from the old plan."

"When class papers are displayed will it include all the papers good and bad, or just the good papers? Will we have the names show? Shall parents be allowed to see work of other pupils? Where does the printing of the better composition work in our school publication come in?"

Answer: "Pupils should always be given the opportunity to see work which is well done not only from the point of view of context but the workmanship as well. There are other qualities in addition to the perfection of context such as neatness, form, and originality, which may provide a better reason for display. This would apply as well to material used in school magazines. It would be worth while to display two papers which show the improvement that an individual had been able to make, even though the second is not a 'perfect' paper. It would give recognition to growth."

"Why cannot percentages be used in arithmetic?"

Answer: "In spite of the fact that arithmetic, spelling, language, vocabularies, etc., might, at the outset seem sufficiently objected to warrant the use of percentages, studies have indicated that various bases may be used in correcting work in this type of subject matter and therefore various results may be obtained. Accordingly, we have discarded the use of percentages in evaluating this type of subject matter along with the letter symbols used in evaluating the other more subjective types of subject matter."

"In the lower grades will it be permissible to use signs such as gold stars, brownies, etc., to designate papers well done?" [2]

Answer: "It is permissible and perhaps desirable to use these devices if they are used in place of the written comments which would appear on the paper if it were the paper of an upper grade pupil. They should not, however, be held up as an award or incentive for good work. If they are used they

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1. Ibid. pp. 5,6
2. Ibid. p. 8

> should be given to a relatively large number of children instead of a chosen few, as most small children are making their best effort most of the time."

The committee in answering questions that have been asked do not feel that a complete piece of work has been done. The committee has merely started to think seriously in new terms and abandoned old forms and procedures.

The schools in Winnetka, Illinois and Bronxville, New York have recognized the difficulties involved in reporting fairly a pupil's progress in the various school subjects. A "goal card" is used in these places to keep the pupils and parents accurately and objectively informed of school progress. While marks have not been altogether abolished; the traditional percentage or letter mark does not appear on the report of school progress to the parent.

The Bronxville goal card for the elementary grades is a double-folded sheet with a single page dimension of 8 by 10½ inches. The first page tells the parents the meaning of the goals. The double inside page lists the objectives for two years of work in written English, oral English, reading, social studies, life science, and arithmetic. The elementary grade goals are grouped together in two's to present the first and second grade goals, the third and fourth grade goals, and the fifth and sixth grade goals. The last page gives information concerning absence and tardiness, gives space for the parent's signature and a place for personal remarks about the child. When the topics on

the goal card are completed the child takes achievement tests to measure his progress. The date completion is entered on the goal card.[1] "There is no reason to assume that in any class any two children will be marked identically, except possibly in such subjects as social studies where social participation in the group is so important as to minimize emphasis on individual rates of accomplishment."[2]

The third and fourth grade goal card attempts:

1. "To set forth in objective statement each fundamental ability, skill, or piece of knowledge which a youngster may be expected to acquire in third and fourth grades.
2. "To indicate to the parent, as these goals are mastered, the progress made by a child. Each time the card is sent home for approval, the parent may see clearly; first, what the child has mastered; second, those skills, abilities or topics on which he is at work, or which are still ahead of him.
3. "From the teacher's comment on the last page, to state whether the child's work during the period under consideration is accelerated, satisfactory or slow-- and whether it represents good, bad or indifferent work on the part of the child in consideration of his own native ability, not contrasted to what some one else may be doing."
4. "To tell the parent when the teacher desires a private conference "on behalf of the child's well being."

The child will learn more than what is listed on the goal card but these things that are learned will be hard to measure objectively and subjectively -- therefore "these additional learnings" are not listed on the goal card.

Beatty states: "We believe that our goal cards are a truer measure of accomplishment than reports of the older type. Most of the children have been quick to see the advantages of this objectivity and we have secured increasing parental enthusiasm for the new form of report." [3]

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1. Willard W. Beatty, Objectifying School Marks, American School Journal, Vol.87, No.1, July 1933, pp. 27-28
2. Ibid. p. 27
3. Ibid. p. 28

Here is a part of the third and fourth grade arithmetic goals.

BRONXVILLE, NEW YORK GOAL CARD

Arithmetic	Date
Beginning Date...	9-8-30
Subtraction (Burk Self Instruction Arithmetics)	
Knows 14 combinations of subtraction in which the upper figure is not more than 9 (Goal A)	10-20-30
$\begin{array}{rrrrrrr} 6 & 6 & 7 & 7 & 8 & 8 & 8 \\ \underline{-2} & \underline{-4} & \underline{-3} & \underline{-4} & \underline{-2} & \underline{-6} & \underline{-3} \end{array}$	
$\begin{array}{rrrrrrr} 8 & 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 & 9 \\ \underline{-5} & \underline{-2} & \underline{-7} & \underline{-3} & \underline{-6} & \underline{-4} & \underline{-5} \end{array}$	
Knows 7 combinations of subtraction in which the upper figure is not more than 9 (Goal B)	10-20-30
$\begin{array}{rrrrrrr} 4 & 6 & 8 & 5 & 5 & 7 & 7 \\ \underline{-2} & \underline{-3} & \underline{-4} & \underline{-3} & \underline{-2} & \underline{-2} & \underline{-5} \end{array}$	
Can subtract 1 from any number (Goal C)	10-29-30
Can subtract 0 from any number and can subtract a number from itself (Goal D)	11-3-30
Knows the combinations of subtraction in which the minuend is larger than 9 (Goal E)	11-6-30
Can prove subtraction (Goal F)	11-19-30
Can apply the combinations to the higher decades (Goal G)	11-19-30
Can add examples, 4 columns wide, 8 addends high	
Can "carry" in subtraction and can apply this principle to all the combinations (Goal H)	
Makes Correct change for.......................	
nickel........... dime.....................	
quarter.......... dollar...................	
half dollar......	
Tells time to the minute..............................	4th Grade
Reads and writes dollars and cents thru $99.99......	begins
Multiplication (Burk Self Instruction Arithmetics)	here
Can multiply by 2 and 3, using all combinations and with carrying (Goal A)	

In the elementary schools the goals for each grade have been determined as far as possible by scientific investigation. When evidence as to what should be done could not be found that which was accepted as best practice was followed.

Worlton reporting on his efforts to abolish comparative marking states: "It appears certain that the relation between the teacher and the child and also the relation between the parent and the child are substantially improved in the majority of cases by the elimination of comparative narkings from the report card. This improved personal relationship enables teachers and parents to exert more effective influence in stimulating and guiding the educational and personality development of the child. It fosters in the school and in the home a more wholesome and joyous atmosphere in which children can live and practice positive traits of character leading to higher scholarship and more desirable qualities of citizenship."[1]

"In an effort to provide against the negative features of the comparative marking system, an experimental form of report card has been in use in the elementary schools of Salt Lake City since September 1930. The characteristic feature of this report form is the elimination of comparative marks. If in the judgment of the teacher the child is progressing in his studies and in the citizenship qualities listed as well as might reasonably be expected in consideration of his individual ability and opportunities his card contains no entries except those of attendance and punctuality. A clean record is evidence that the pupil is doing thoroughly satisfactory work for him although it may be far below the quality and the amount of the work which is done by his class-mates. If, however, the teacher believes that the pupil could and should do better than he has been doing, she checks the subject or the character quality in which he is deficient, as a matter of information to parents as an invitation for parental co-operation in meeting the situation. A plus sign is used the following period to indicate that improvement has been made or another check to show the weakness still persists."[2]

"It will be observed that effort rather than accomplishment becomes the primary factor in determining the scholarship and citizenship record of the pupil. The child with low native ability has an equal chance with the highly endowed child to make a favorable showing on this report form. If he is industrious, he does not receive official notice of his relative inferiority in scholarship during his entire attendance in the elementary school."[3]

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1. J.L. Worlton, "Shall We Eliminate The Comparative Marking System From The Report Card?" Elem. Sch. Journ., Vol.33, p.176
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid. p.180

"REPORT CARD USED IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN SALT LAKE CITY"[1]

"ATTENDANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP"

Periods	1st Semester			2nd Semester			
	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	
School Days							
Days Absent							
Times Tardy							
Reading							
Writing							
Spelling							
Social Studies (Geog.,Hist.,Civ.)							
Nature							
Arithmetic							
Health Education							
Art							
Music							

1. "No mark in scholarship means that progress is satisfactory"
2. "A mark like this (V) means that improvement is desirable in the subject or trait checked."
3. "A mark like this (t) signifies improvement during the current period."

"Parents should confer with the principal or teacher if the child's report continues to show unsatisfactory results."[1]

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[1] Ibid. p.181

"CITIZENSHIP"[1]

Periods	1st Semester			2nd Semester		
	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
Deportment						
Application						
Attitude toward school						
Courtesy						
Self Reliance						
Neatness in -						
1. Desks and books						
2. Written work						
3. Appearance						
Fairness in -						
1. Work						
2. Play						

"Kindergarten children will receive marks in attendance only the first semester and in attendance and citizenship the first twelve weeks and thereafter in attendance, citizenship and scholarship."

Promotion Record

Date..................

..................................is promoted to the
.... Grade

....Teacher

....Principal

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1. Ibid. p.181

School marks, as we know them, are traditional things. They have been passed down to us since we entered the first grade. Most of them are issued on the basis of one hundred percent. In rare cases the unit of 5 or 10 has been used for marking. The majority of us know the school mark as A, B, C, D, F or E which are interpreted into numerical values. Through their constant use we have learned that the nearer we get to one hundred per cent the more perfect we are. Regardless of how the traditional mark is given there is considerable competition between the members of a class to see who can get the high marks. Occasionally a teacher has tried to take the emphasis from the tradional mark by substituting an original system of marking. Soon the system becomes known and again the youngsters live in school under many of the evils that go with mass competition.

It is astonishing how little information the average parent gets when he receives the report card. Perhaps his son received an F in arithmetic. Let us suppose that the child is in fourth grade. He fails in arithmetic because he can't do long division. Does the parent know that his son can't do long division because he doesn't know the number combinations? All the parent knows is the mark in arithmetic. He doesn't know why his boy received an F. He isn't told how his child can improve his work. The responsibility for the interpretation of a mark belongs to the school. It is important for the parent to know why his child has failed. It is still more important for the parent to know what can be done to relieve the pupil of his difficulties.

Constructive criticism should take the place of the traditional school mark. It should be the desire of the teachers to show the child wherein his weakness lies and through comments on class papers and by individual conferences, direct the teaching to meet the needs of the individual.

Constructive criticism and the subsequent teaching in this way build a remedial program for the child. Considerable care must be taken in writing criticism which can be understood by the pupil but cannot be used to compare abilities. Satisfactory papers need not be commented upon unless the child has shown unusual presentation for his ability. The child quickly learns that a paper without comment has been accepted as satisfactory.

The goal card used at Winnetka and Bronxville offers a splendid opportunity to abolish the use of traditional marks by organizing school work in units or goals and giving credit for the completion of each unit of work. These units or goals show what work is required in the various grades. When the work is completed the date of completion is noted on the goal card. This procedure encourages individual progress on the basis of each pupil's effort and ability. It also tends to discourage mass education by treating pupils on a more individual scale. The pupils have an opportunity to watch their own progress in relation to their own ability. The goal system constructed after careful scientific investigation measures in an accurate, objective way things which can be measured. It excludes many things we believe are taught but of which there is no positive

proof of accomplishment. Diagnostic testing does not exist for some of our school subjects. Some phases of social studies are an example of this type of subject matter.

The work already started in Salt Lake City, Fresno and Newton toward the abolishing of formal marks issues a challenge to all people vitally interested in more accurate ways of reporting school progress. New testing procedures must be found to correlate more accurately the pupil's ability and effort with his accomplishments.

Chapter V

The Use of the Personal Letter in Reporting to Parents

The traditional report card has been abolished in some places to make way for the use of the personal letter. Report cards have been a target for considerable criticism. Cubberley writing on report cards and marks states: "So meaningless are the reports at times that some principals would do away with them entirely, and send no reports home except when the pupil is falling behind. The pupil comparison, envy, excitement, charges of unfairness, discouragement, destruction of the reports and forging of signatures represent the bad side of the monthly report card."[1]

Robie writes: "The jealousy and bitterness alone caused by pupils comparing marks with each other would justify their exclusion. Other evils often occur, such as dishonesty, wherein the pupil erases the teacher's rank and inserts his own, writes his parent's signature, or gets his older brother or sister to sign. Pupils often become discouraged when they receive poor ranks, and do not try to do good work in succeeding periods."[2]

Smith states: "Competitive marking has been condemned by the finding of psychology and by educational experience. It is doomed, and its successor, scientific analysis, is already inside our doors."[3]

Abbott reports the use of a personal letter at Fresno, California in 1930. Discussion in a series of teachers' meetings brought out the substitution of a personal letter for the report card. "The following plans were made:[4]

1. 'Use principal's letter head for the letters.
2. 'Include a section (one paragraph ordinarily) in the child's progress in subject matter. For example: "Joe's work is entirely satisfactory in all subjects except reading. In art and music he is doing exceptional work. In reading his chief difficulty etc........
3. 'Include a section on character traits, personal habits,

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1. Ellwood P. Cubberley, The Principal and His School. p. 506
2. Everett E. Robie, "Report Cards", Journal of Ed. Vol.114, p.123
3. Eugene Randolph Smith, "Marks & Marking", Child Welfare Mag. Vol. 27. p.75
4. Robert B. Abbott "An Experiment with Reports to Parents" Bulletin No.10, Dept. of Elem. School Principals, April 1931, pp.350-358

social difficulties or other accomplishments or deficiencies that affect the development of the child's'personality.'

4.'Letters to be signed by the teacher and read and approved by the principal.

5.'When the teacher felt that a conference with the parent would be valuable when she wished to impart or receive information that the child should not hear, she should ask for a conference stating the time that she would be free to see parents.

6.'Due to the time it would take to write a letter as compared with a report card, report letters should be sent out every eight weeks for all pupils.

7.'Letters might well be sent at any time, but particularly at four week intervals to the parents of the children who are having considerable difficulty at school - whether academic, social, emotional, or physical. Requests for conferences with parents are better in all such instances.

8.'The principal should send out a mimeographed letter to parents giving the proposed plan and stating the reasons for following it - the letter to include a request for suggestions and comments from parents on the plan and also such comments on the report letters as would aid the teacher in teaching the child.'

"The possible advantages to this procedure:[1]

1. 'Put the emphasis on the growth of the whole child.
2. 'Better psychologically because it looks to the effect of the report on the child.

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[1] Ibid. p. 350

3. 'Fits each individual child.
4. 'We can, and should more easily mark the child in terms of his ability and what should be expected of him -- rather than entirely on the basis of comparison with the class.
5. 'Allows definite statement of the child's difficulties, whether academic, social, or physical.
6. 'Insures closer cooperation of parent and school because of more definite statement of the child's difficulties.
7. 'Allows parent to write information to the teacher by providing a space and encouraging parent to make comments.
8. 'Allows teacher to encourage the child by commenting on achievements other than those listed on the ordinary report card.
9. 'It probably means that the teacher would need to know the child better in order to write such a letter. This would also include better knowledge of his subject matter needs.
10. 'Instead of saying in effect, 'these are John's weaknesses. What are you going to do about it?' say,'these are John's difficulties and here is a possible program for overcoming them. We can deal with his academic needs, for the most part, but we need to work together on these personal growth problems.
11. 'It makes the report a teaching act rather than a clerical job."

"The possible disadvantages:[1]

1. 'Takes a great deal of time -- possibly more than teachers can afford.
2. 'May not give parents satisfaction, particularly if they are looking for grades on subjects.
3. 'May not drive the child to further effort as a report on his accomplishment in subjects may do.
4. 'May allow the teacher to teach without keeping records of the progress of her pupils in subject matter.
5. 'May be too personal.

"It was decided in a teachers' meeting to have each teacher attempt to write letters for youngsters to be used as "type letters", one for an average pupil, one for a weak pupil (socially or academically), and another for an excellent pupil. The teachers had conferences with the principal. Two things were apparent to all, the importance of time and the need for a technique in writing. The group felt that the extra time spent in writing letters would be great at first, but would decrease as a definite technique was adopted.

"A few of the letters were read, the principal calling for those he knew presented either the difficulties that should be brought out or the ideas for a discussion brought out the following points:[2]

1. 'We needed to know more about our children to be able to write letters such as these.

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[1] Ibid. p. 351
[2] Ibid.

2. 'We should be definite in our statements, giving instances or the instances from which we drew our conclusions. (This proved to be important, we found later. It was much more valuable to the parent and the child, as measured in terms of changed conduct, for the teacher to write, 'Robert does not pay close attention to the work of the class. In arithmetic he does not hear the explanations or assignments of the teacher and must be told individually', than writing, 'Robert is inattentive'.)
3. 'It is well to tie up an accomplishment of the child with something in which he needs to make progress. When pointing out that Lester is careless and untidy in his written work, note that he is very careful of his personal appearance. Thus ideals are particular rather than general, and the teacher uses an ideal the child has so that it aids in developing habits and attitudes he has not acquired.
4. 'The teacher must get at causes -- at least at immediate causes if not at ultimate causes. The report is not satisfactory with 'George is weak in arithmetic' but must go on to say that he 'does not know the following combinations' with a suggestion on how the parents may help him if they wish. Or'George is not getting along well in his class because he does not remember that he must take his turn. For example..........etc.'

5. 'It makes considerable difference how the letter is worded. It should be worded so that the teacher's objective yet personal interest in the growth of the child is shown. 'John is unruly and belligerent' may give the impression that the teacher is taking it as a personal affront. It is better to indicate just what is meant, by writing 'In working with his classmates, John is often belligerent and inclined to break the rules of the group'. This is not necessarily tact. It is making certain that the point of view of the teacher is understood by the parent and child, as well as the facts of the case.

6. 'The school should assume in most cases full responsibility for the teaching of school subjects, asking parents only in special cases to assist (and then only under the guidance of the school). The school is technically prepared to teach subject matter as parents are not. Parents and school cooperate closely on development of character traits, habits and attitudes.

7. 'Each letter should fit the needs of each child. The type of letter that would lead John to further effort would cause Doris to withdraw into herself, considering herself a failure. It is best to try persuasion and to interest the child in making an improvement rather than forcing him in any way. Remember that the letter is a teaching act and not a clerical job.

8. 'Judge children on childish levels - not by adult standards. If we continue to judge them on the basis of what children of their age can do and want to do they will be, in the long run, better adults than if we are always comparing them with what they should be as adults.

9. 'It is easier to write letters for the exceptional child - those who stand out in the group, either above or below the average. It is hard to write something distinctive, individual about the average child. This indicates a need to observe more carefully and to know better the average child. It means that we need to develop a technic of recording as well as of observing the traits and activities of pupils.'

A mimeographed letter was sent out with the report letters. A copy of it is inserted below:[1]

"Dear Parents:

We are sending you this time a report letter rather than a report card. You will note that this letter includes a report of your child's work in the academic subjects (reading, writing music, social studies, etc.) and a report on character traits or social habits. The statement concerning the subjects will usually be one saying that 'John's work is satisfactory in all subjects except----------' followed by a statement of the subjects in which he is doing excellent work and those in which his work is poor. This may be followed by a statement of why

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1. Ibid. p. 353

he is weak in a certain subject - such as lack of attention, application, or lack of the ground work necessary.

The part of the report that deals with character traits, is in our opinion, much the more important of the two. It will tell definitely the traits in which we think he needs to improve and it will often include a description of the things that happen at school that make us think this. This gives you a definite picture of your child at school. This part of the report will include not only those habits which he needs to improve but will also give him credit for the very fine things he has done during the period.

You will readily see that this type of report has several advantages over the old report card. It still gives you a report on how your child is getting along in his school subjects but it places emphasis on the development of character traits and social habits. You would prefer that your child were able to get along with other children, able to think for himself, be honest and upright than that he should stand high in his subjects. The school can do more than you can, ordinarily, to improve his work in subject matter, but we need your cooperation and you need ours in making a better boy of him or in overcoming any social handicaps he may have. These report letters should be of much more value along that line than the report cards were.

The report is sent home with the child, who necessarily sees it. In many cases we may want to tell the parent something which we do not wish to have the child see or read. On that case we will ask in a sentence at the bottom of the report letter

for a conference with you. We hope that you will make every effort to hold a conference with a teacher in case she asks for it.

We are making this report with the child in mind chiefly - rather than the parent. We are concerned more with its effect on him - encouraging him when he needs encouragement, urging him to greater effort when that is needed, praising him when he needs praise, showing which acts we highly approve of and those of which we disapprove. Report cards often discourage the child who has just begun to succeed and often give some children a 'don't care' attitude because they so seldom get good grades as compared with the rest of the class. Not all children can get good grades. Why give some of them an idea that they can't succeed, and others the idea that they are succeeding when they aren't doing their best? All children, however, can learn to be honest, play fair, get along with others, and other like character traits.

We are trying this report plan for this year. Since it requires a great deal more work on the part of the teachers, we are sending out reports to all children only at eight-week intervals. On children who are doing unsatisfactory work we will send reports at four week intervals or notify you in some manner.

We would greatly appreciate your reaction to this type of report. Will you please tell us on the back of the report letter what you think of it? Any comments of information that will be of assistance to us in knowing and teaching your child will be of considerable value. The report letter is only a substitute

for a personal conference with the parent. Where it is possible for you to come to the school and talk with the teacher, that is of course, much more satisfactory.

Sincerely yours,

Principal"

"There were, however, several things that were apparently due to the report letters:[1]

1. 'After the report letters went home there was obvious improvement on the part of children who had tended to disturb the class. The definite statement of the nature of the offenses or attitudes often brought a different point of view of his actions to the child, and the fact that his parents knew what he was doing in school seemed to make a great difference. Much of the conscious development of character traits of all pupils can be laid at the door of the letters.
2. 'There was a greater effort to overcome the academic difficulties listed in the letters apparently putting these weaknesses in black and white and sending them to parents in the very definite statements we used made it possible for the parents to exert greater influence, or made it easier for the pupil to know just where to direct his efforts.
3. 'Parents understood the purpose and the methods of the school as they never had before. This understanding

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[1] Ibid. p. 355

undoubtedly had had an influence on the attitude of the children toward the school, since it is often a reflection of the attitude at home.

4. 'Parents cooperated with the teachers in carrying out programs designed to help their children better than ever before.
5. 'Subjects assumed their proper relationship both to parents and children.
6. 'The Report letters often served as a program for the teachers to follow out for the following period. This was sometimes true of parent and child.

"The report letters were not satisfactory to all parents by any means. The many comments received on the back of the first reports were proof enough, however, of their general approval. Many commented, "We very much appreciate this new type of report." A few comments, however, were along the line of, 'I want to know just how well my boy is doing in school work. I know already what his faults are and that's my job. You stick to your job of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic and I'll take care of the other things'.

At the close of the school year a questionnaire was sent out to get the general opinion of parents in their estimation of the new reports. A copy of it is as follows:[1]

"We would like to have from each parent in the district a very frank statement of his approval or disapproval of our report letter plan as carried out this year. We want this information to guide us in making our plans for next year and to

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[1] Ibid. p. 356

answer more fully the questions that have come from other school systems about the plan.

Do you: approve, disapprove, very decidedly approve, very decidedly disapprove, doubtful? (Underline one)

Why ______________________________

What suggestions would you make?

Please return this to us."

Two hundred and twenty-two families answered this questionnaire out of a possible two hundred and fifty in the school (not including kindergarten). The results:[1]

Table 2 "Attitudes of Parents Toward New Reports"

	Very Decidedly Approve	Approve	Doubtful	Disapprove	Very Decidedly Disapprove	Total
Number	61	120	16	14	11	222
Percent	27	54	8	6	5	100

These returns from the questionnaire show a general approval of the report letter over the traditional report.

Here are some of the comments which came with the answers to the questionnaire:[2]

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1. Ibid. p. 356
2. Ibid.

"Approve:

'Because it is much more important to know my child is meeting life than to have an attempt made at an exact grade in academic subject matter.

'It seems that this system lays more stress on character building of the child as well as giving the parent an idea as to how the child stands in his studies. I most certainly approve and hope it continues.

'The individual analysis of each child is found to result in a more detailed report, helpful to teacher, parent and child - much more accurate information can be given of each child's own needs.

'The parent receives so much more knowledge about the child than just the graded report cards. It is a satisfaction to know the home training reflects so much on the school work and play. It also brings the teacher and parent closer together.

'We like this type of report card very much because of its personal touch and the individuality of each pupil.

'Because they go with the new method of teaching we have now.

"Disapprove:

'I am not at all in favor of the report letter. In the first place I want to know how Ted is doing in the different studies and I have absolutely no way of knowing. I have not had a grade on a single study for two or three years. If I ask the teachers, they say, "Oh

Ted is getting along fine." That does not mean a thing to me; I want something to compare each time he brings his report home. If I find that he is not as good as the time before, there is something to show him and he can see the difference himself too. I continually ask him what grade he got in different subjects and I never know. He doesn't know or hasn't got his paper back. I just find out finally whether he passes or not.'

'The idea of education as an end is too indefinite for a child. I think he needs a definite regular report of his progress.'

'It is not comprehensive enough and could not be used to advantage by a child leaving this school and entering another.'

'It is impossible for a parent to know or appreciate the effect of your new report card plan in the group as a whole; the effect especially upon the students whose attitudes toward each other are often exaggerated by the old grade system. I like to see a new plan tried long enough for definite results. We parents can judge from only one angle. Personally I prefer the old report card with grades on each subject because the preference for certain subjects with my children I believe is a matter of environment which can be largely controlled by home encouragement and help. I have in the past rewarded my children for good grades - helping

their school bank accounts. It has been quite easy thus with added home help to change C's to A's with our children. According to your new plan I can be of no service except as regards school citizenship because I know little of the quality of work being done or the weak points.'

There was a need for a subject matter card at the end of the year because of "transfers during the summer" and the application of suggestive work for summer study. "A card was drawn up which 'left space under each subject for the teacher to write in any suggestions that the parents might wish to carry out during the summer'; e.g., 'need drill in the following combinations', 'should do much reading of easy books,' etc. It also included a space for standardized test results (recorded as 'at grade,' 'Below grade' or 'above grade') as well as a space for any remarks that the teacher wished to make as a summary of the child's growth in character traits during the year. This card was not printed, but merely run off on a duplicating machine.[1]

The following points are offered as ways of improving the procedure described above:

1. "Mechanics of process improved by having secretary type reports out.
2. "Standards of what to expect of children at different ages need to be more objective and more carefully worked out.

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[1] Ibid. p. 357

3. "Improve outline for recording child growth. Such an outline would include for example: physical growth, emotional growth, social growth and individual abilities and interests as main headings with sub-headings to be developed.
4. "Methods of recording observations need to be pooled, so that each teacher will use a plan which will be of greatest value to her."

This experiment was carried out at Fresno, California. Fresno is a "city and county seat of Fresno County, situated in the San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley, the Southern Pacific and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroads. The city is an important fruit growing centre."[1] The population was 52,513 in 1930, which is a 16.5 percent increase since 1920.[2]

Newton, Massachusetts recently abolished the report card form substituting the personal letter which will be issued at least twice a year. A committee has organized "Suggested Procedures for Evaluating And Reporting Pupil Growth."

"The revision of our pupil evaluation, recording and reporting procedures places greater emphasis upon integrated pupil growth than ever before. Teachers are being called upon to think of the pupil as an entity, a many-sided composite, rather than to think of him within the limits of the narrow confines of achievement in school subjects. In evaluating pupils, therefore, all aspects of pupil growth must be considered."[3]

"To assist the teacher to think in terms of all aspects of

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1. The Americana, Vol. 12, p. 93
2. "Fifteenth Census of the U.S." 1930, Vol. 1, p. 128
3. "Suggested Procedures For Evaluating And Reporting Pupil Growth," Ways & Means Comm. Bull. No.3, December 1933, Newton, Massachusetts (School Department) p. 1

a pupil's make-up the committee has prepared a list of habit attitudes, traits, etc., which is a compilation of material gathered from many sources. Any such listing of habits, attitudes, traits, etc., cannot hope to include all of the elements necessary to present a complete picture of any pupil. It is felt, however, that the list presented is sufficiently inclusive to provide a reasonably clear picture and yet be within the limits of practicability."[1]

A check list to assist in the evaluating of the pupil is given on page 91.

"Preparation of the Semi-Annual Reports to Parents" [2]

These suggestions are given to help teachers in the writing of the reports to parents:

"The reports should be addressed to both parents. In the case of those pupils who have only one parent at home, step-parents, or guardians, the teacher will address the letter to the proper individual or individuals.

"The January letters will report on the growth of the first half-year. They should not be held for distribution of one day but should be sent as rapidly as they are completed. The June letters should contain a summary of the year's growth. They will necessarily need to be held until a set date at the end of the year as was formerly. This does not mean that they would need to be written at the very end of the month. Teachers may begin early in the month preparing the report for those pupils in which there will be little real change by the close of school,

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid. p. 16

NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Newton, Massachusetts

Suggested Criteria for Pupil Study and Evaluation

Physical Health

- Posture
- Defects: speech, ears, eyes, heart, T.B. contacts, tonsils and adenoids, glands
- Attendance
- Weight- emphasis on gain
- Muscular co-ordination*
- Nervous tension*
- Physical abuse - over sex tendencies
- Normal adolescent adjustment and growth
- Vitality
  - Easily fatigued
  - Power of endurance
  - Physical exuberance, "pep"
- Health Habits
  - Sleep and rest
  - Food
  - Elimination
  - Cleanliness
  - Protecting associates from contagion and infection

Mental Health

- Security and Insecurity*
- Self-control
- Compensations and escapes*
- Sense of humor*
- Supersensitiveness*
- Courage*
- Conformist*
- Aggressiveness*
- Swayed by moods*
- Jealousy and envy*
- Frustrations*
- Evasions*
- Feelings of inferiority or fears*
- Sense of proportion*
- Ability to relax*
- Adaptability*

Social Adjustments

- Considerate of others*
- Appreciates other viewpoints
- Willing to participate in group activities
- Leader or follower
- General attitudes
  - Obedience
  - Desire for improvement
  - Trustworthiness
  - Dependability*
  - Respects majority decision
  - ←Cleanliness and personal appearance
- Maturity for group
- Boy and girl relationships*

These criteria are for judging children who are properly placed in grade, course and division.

*These criteria are explained in detail in the bulletin.

(See also next page - 91')

Work Habits

- Application
- Concentration
- Perseverance
- Span of Attention
- Accuracy
- Work Tempo*
- Uses time judiciously
- Initiative
- Reliability
- Follows directions
- Neatness and orderliness
- Responsibility*
- Seeks Assistance*
- Makes independent use of reference material
- Resourcefulness
- Thoroughness
- Punctuality
- Desire for improvement
- Work Characteristics

Achievement

- Relation to capacity
  - Better work than might be expected
  - What is expected
  - Less than might be expected
- Influence of
  - Interest on achievement
  - Physical health
  - Educational foundation
  - Mental health
  - Home background
  - Social adjustment
  - Outside activities
- Makes creative contributions*
- Improvement effected since last report
- Normal growth
- Exceptional growth
- Achievement Test Results
- Meets requirement of course in case of college divisions
- Standards of Accomplishment*

*These criteria are explained in detail in the bulletin.

(continued from previous page - 91)

leaving until later those for which more evidence may be needed. In this way the work may be evenly distributed over the month and the last minute rush avoided.

"Letters should be simple, concise, and frank statements. Stereotyping and formalism should be studiously avoided.

"Make the letters fit the homes into which they are going. For the home where English is not the mother-tongue a much simpler type of letter should be sent. In a home where the parents can understand, a much more analytical letter will be appreciated.

"When negative criticism is used, teachers should seek to point out remedial measures.

"Make it a point to say something good about the pupil. Even in the most difficult and trying cases, there will be something that may be said to the advantage of the pupil.

"A carbon copy of the letter will be made.

"A receipt form is to be made out and included with the letter. When it is signed and returned by the parent, it should be attached with the other materials to the copy of the letter.

"Sample Cases Illustrating The Use Of The New Pupil Evaluation Forms And Procedures:[1]

"Sample Case No.1"[2]

"Sample Case #1"

"The following is a letter which concerns a boy of average ability who is responding fairly well.

Dear Mr. and Mrs.-----------:

You will be glad to hear that Charles is carrying on the work of the fifth grade in a

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1. Ibid. p. 18
2. Ibid. p. 30

very satisfactory way. He shows excellent spirit and ability in all playground activities.

His English is not up to the quality of the good work he is doing in Arithmetic and Spelling. Geography and History offer him more difficulty, and he would be in trouble were it not for his excellent effort. The help that you have been giving him at home since our talk last fall has been a real aid in these subjects.

You can take pride in a faithful and conscientious boy.

Sincerely yours, "

"Sample Case #7"[1]

"A letter sent to the home of an above-average child who is making unusual progress.

Dear Mr. and Mrs.-------------:

Jane has been working faithfully and successfully during the last four months. She is always ready to contribute when she has an understanding of the subject or to ask a question on a point with which she needs help. She goes a step beyond mere learning of an assignment and often brings in her individual contribution to class. She has done remarkable work in Science. Both you and she have been generous with reference material.

All her good habits of work and her natural ability have made school accomplishment unusually satisfactory.

Sincerely yours,

"Sample Case #10"[2]

Dear Mr. and Mrs.*---------:

Philip has shown himself a happy child in kindergarten. He adjusts well in the group, is interested in all the things we do, and is eager to attempt new activities.

Sincerely yours, "

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[1] Ibid. p. 33
[2] Ibid.

"Sample Case #8"

"The two following letters might be used in telling about children of limited capacity who are doing the best they can and for whom no other placement or adjustment is possible now.

Dear Mr. and Mrs.-----------:

Philip is interested in school and is happy because he always tries to do his best and to be helpful. He plays so well with the other children that they like him and are glad to have him in the class.

School subjects are difficult for him. He spells well and writes nicely. He gets some Arithmetic by great effort. He cannot get the thought from Geography, History and Language work.

However, we feel sure that he is getting much that is of real value to him from his school life.

Sincerely yours,"

"Sample Case #9"

Dear Mr. and Mrs.-----------:

Although Clara still finds many of her school subjects difficult she is making good effort and is getting many worthwhile values from her school life.

She is pleasant and co-operative, always willing to do her best. She can get and give pleasure in reading easy material, and can spell fairly well. Her writing can be improved by more practice. She does some Arithmetic through great effort, but she fails to get thought from content subjects.

Sincerely yours,"

"Sample Case #11" (Kindergarten)

Dear Mr. and Mrs.-----------:

Mary seems happy and is enjoying her contacts with other children. While she has taken rather a long time in getting started I feel that now she has begun to have power in gaining vocabulary and in comprehending what she learns.

Sincerely yours,"

This letter was sent home to all parents who have children in the elementary schools.

NEWTON SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

"To Parents:

The sympathetic and cooperative attitude of parents generally has been of great help to us in working out what we feel is a more human and valuable system of reporting on individual pupil progress.

There is enclosed herewith a letter from the teacher of your child which has been written to provide you with a report of his progress to date. We feel that you want most to know what use your child is making of his abilities and how he is overcoming his limitations. We believe that health of mind and body, ability to live and work successfully with others, work habits and attitudes, all have an important effect upon achievement as well as being of great importance in themselves.

The letter of necessity is merely a summary statement. We shall be pleased to have you discuss with the teacher any matter concerning your child in greater detail.

Cordially yours,

Mary J. Cleveland
Heloise Chase
Alice J. Kennedy
Mary Gianferante
Maude E. Stewart
Haydn Pearson, Chairman

Approved:
John Lund,
Superintendent"

"Newton, Massachusetts - city in Middlesex County on Charles River, and on the Boston and Albany Railroad."

"Newton is a beautiful residential city."

"Newton has some manufacturing establishments, chief of which are silk mills, fire alarm supply works, paper box and curtain factories, printing works, worsted mills and cordage factory." [1]

The population was 65,276 in 1930. There has been an increase of 41.7 per cent since 1920.[2]

The disadvantages of the use of the personal letter as a means of reporting pupil progress which were listed by the Fresno teachers are especially interesting. They claim that the writing of letters to the parents takes a great deal of time. The writing of a personal letter to each parent can offer a great deal of satisfaction to the teacher. In Newton where the letter is in actual practice as a means of informing parents of the progress of their children in school, it is believed by the administration that no more time is utilized than was previously spent under the traditional marking system. The problem of satisfying the parents has been pointed out. In the City of Newton over 90 per cent of the comments received from parents either in writing or by telephone, were favorable toward the no marking system. A large part of the remaining 10 per cent were parents whose children have taken pride or received rewards for excellence in studies. Parents and some teachers thought that youngsters working under the no marking system would not receive the drive necessary to keep their work up to where it should be.

1."The Americana," Vol. 20, p. 292
2."Fifteenth Census of the U.S." 1930, Vol. 1 p.160

In the opinion of the teacher groups the pupils as a whole are doing a better and a more satisfactory piece of work under the new system. The objection raised toward the use of the personal letter because it would lead to a laxity in record keeping is definitely administrative as a problem which can be adjusted by saving actual class papers of the individual for conference with the pupil and parent. While the personal letter may be too personal there is no particular danger when the letter is written tactfully and kept confidential.

The personal letter aids teaching by forcing the teacher to analyze the individual. This should also tend to stress the importance of the child as an individual.

In Newton, parents are notified by telephone or letter about the condition of pupils at various intervals as the need arises. The final letter of the year is a continuation of the mid-year letter. It summarizes improvements which have taken place and the final achievement and proper placement of the pupil for the next year.

The purpose of the letter while it definitely states the conditions, is actually an urge for a closer personal contact between the home and school to bring about a better knowledge and understanding of the home conditions under which the child is working. This should ultimately bring about a greater individual achievement by pupils necessarily working in groups.

Chapter VI

Summary and Conclusions

From facts already presented in the first chapter a typical report card form would probably contain the following:[1]

1. Marks for the whole year given three times a semester.
2. More space for marks in school subjects than habits and attitudes.
3. Interpretation of teachers' marks as A, B, C, and etc.
4. Space for an explanation to parents.
5. It would be constructed of white cardboard approximately four inches long and six inches wide.

The schools are working toward good citizenship. Hence many of the schools provide a place for rating specific habits and attitudes. Some of the lists of habits, and attitudes are not well organized, contain duplications, and point out negative characteristics. There is a question whether lists of negative habits and attitudes should be placed before children when they do not contribute toward good citizenship.

Approximately two thirds of the report card forms emphasize the need for cooperation between the home and school.

The lack of reliability and consistency of teachers' marks demand that school officials plan several teachers' meetings based on the marking system. In the carrying out of a campaign for reliability and consistency of school marks the following will be found helpful:

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[1] Francis E. Homer, A Survey of Elementary School Pupil Report Forms, Bulletin No.8, Department of Elementary School Principals, p. 234, April 1929

1. The making of uniform standards by all the teachers on a cooperative plan to be used in judging the pupils ability to achieve definite things.
2. In marking pupils with letters, each letter to be defined in detail as a symbol for abilities to do certain things understood by pupil, parent, teacher, and principal.
3. The use of the "normal probability curve" as a useful tool in the measurement of pupils scholastic abilities.
4. The use of standardized tests and scales for all subject matter for which objective material is available.
5. Assigned reading on curves and the distribution of marks.
6. Teachers' meetings in which curves in marking are discussed.
7. Each to be required to tabulate and graph her marks before she sends them to the office at the close of each marking period.
8. The placing of each teachers' scholarship marks on a chart in the principal's office or teachers' room.
9. The discussion of the marking chart with individual teachers and the teachers as a group.

Progressive public schools are gradually leaving the traditional report card form for an all inclusive report which gives an account of the individual pupil as a whole. The newer report form gives a "Scholarship Report" and a "Habits and Attitudes Report". The former is a report on the fundamental school

subjects and the latter tells about the qualities in the child which make for good character and citizenship.

The enlarged program that exists in the more progressive public schools today should be given a place on the report card which is the official means of contact between home and school. The traditional report forms answered the purpose of a scholarship report which was common to that period in our school history where emphasis was placed mainly on reading, writing and arithmetic. Today a school program is presented which has a much broader aspect, therefore a more detailed report on the whole child is desirable.

In the change from the traditional scholarship report to the newer "Scholarship" - "Habits and Attitudes Report" care should be taken to have the transition come gradually. The public has a right to know why the newer report is more desirable. Considerable education of parents, teachers, principals and pupils must be carried on to insure a cooperative attitude toward the change from the traditional to the newer type report form.

The gradual educating of the community from the traditional report form should lead to the "Scholarship" and "Habits and Attitudes Report". These can lead to the use of a goal card. The best type of goal card should concentrate on satisfying the needs of three individuals:

1. To the child it must list the work of the task before him so that he knows what he is required to do without confusion. Then he can plan to work at a rate of speed

which is best for him with due consideration for the situation as it applies to him.

2. To the teacher it should give the work of the grade in detail showing the levels of achievement that should be attained before a child is ready to advance to the next step.

3. For the parent it should serve as a comprehensive report of a child's progress in school showing the coming stages of advancement that are pertinent to each youngster.

Report cards can be abolished in the elementary schools. The personal letter as a means of reporting progress in school has taken the place of the report card in some of the more progressive schools. The advantages of the personal letter as a means of reporting pupil progress in school are as follows:

1. It is a report on the whole child.
2. A child is treated as an individual on the basis of his ability to achieve certain standards.
3. It can be used so that parents can't compare youngsters in scholarship and personal qualities.
4. It should abolish fear, bitterness, jealousy, hatred, and other undesirable qualities that sometimes result with the use of a report card.
5. It gives the teacher the opportunity to spend the time on teaching and preparation which would be spent on clerical work tabulating marks under the traditional system.

6. It can contribute toward the elimination of mass competition for school marks.

7. It should result in better teaching as a result of closer cooperation between home and school.

Chapter VII

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